

**SYSTEM FOR DETECTING, DIAGNOSING, AND
TREATING CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE**

Related Applications

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part application of co-pending U.S. Application No. 10/127,227, filed on April 19, 2002, which is a continuation of U.S. Application No. 09/956,596, filed on September 19, 2001, now abandoned, which is a continuation of U.S. Application No. 09/481,084, filed on January 11, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,328,699, all incorporated by reference herein. This application also claims the benefit of Provisional Application Serial No. 60/470,468, filed May 13, 2003, which is incorporated by reference herein.

Background of the Invention

Field of the Invention

[0002] This invention relates generally to systems and methods for detecting, diagnosing and treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient.

Description of the Related Art

[0003] The optimum management of patients with chronic diseases requires that therapy be adjusted in response to changes in the patient's condition. Ideally, these changes are measured by daily patient self-monitoring prior to the development of symptoms. Self-monitoring and self-administration of therapy forms a closed therapeutic loop, creating a dynamic management system for maintaining homeostasis. Such a system can, in the short term, benefit day-to-day symptoms and quality-of-life, and in the long term, prevent progressive deterioration and complications.

[0004] In some cases, timely administration of a single dose of a therapy can prevent serious acute changes in the patient's condition. One example of such a short-term disease management strategy is commonly used in patients with asthma. The patient acutely self-administers an inhaled bronchodilator when daily readings from a hand-held spirometer or flowmeter exceed a normal range. This has been effective for preventing or aborting acute asthmatic attacks that could lead to hospitalization or death.

[0005] In another chronic disease, diabetes mellitus, current self-management strategies impact both the short and long term sequelae of the illness. Diabetic patients self-monitor blood glucose levels from one to three times daily and correspondingly adjust their self-administered injectable insulin or oral hypoglycemic medications according to their physician's prescription (known as a "sliding scale"). More "brittle" patients, usually those with juvenile-onset diabetes, may require more frequent monitoring (e.g., 4 to 6 times daily), and the readings may be used to adjust an external insulin pump to more precisely control glucose homeostasis. These frequent "parameter-driven" changes in diabetes management prevent hospitalization due to symptoms caused by under-treatment (e.g., hyperglycemia with increased hunger, thirst, urination, blurred vision), and over-treatment (e.g., hypoglycemia with sweating, palpitations, and weakness). Moreover, these aggressive management strategies have been shown to prevent or delay the onset of long-term complications, including blindness, kidney failure, and cardiovascular disease.

[0006] There are approximately 60 million people in the U.S. with risk factors for developing chronic cardiovascular diseases, including high blood pressure, diabetes, coronary artery disease, valvular heart disease, congenital heart disease, cardiomyopathy, and other disorders. Another 10 million patients have already suffered quantifiable structural heart damage but are presently asymptomatic. Still yet, there are 5 million patients with symptoms relating to underlying heart damage defining a clinical condition known as congestive heart failure (CHF). Although survival rates have improved, the mortality associated with CHF remains worse than many common cancers. The number of CHF patients is expected to grow to 10 million within the coming decade as the population ages and more people with damaged hearts are surviving.

[0007] CHF is a condition in which a patient's heart works less efficiently than it should, and a condition in which the heart fails to supply the body sufficiently with the oxygen-rich blood it requires, either during exercise or at rest. To compensate for this condition and to maintain blood flow (cardiac output), the body retains sodium and water such that there is a build-up of fluid hydrostatic pressure in the pulmonary blood vessels that drain the lungs. As this hydrostatic pressure overwhelms oncotic pressure and lymph flow, fluid transudates from the pulmonary veins into the pulmonary interstitial spaces, and

eventually into the alveolar air spaces. This complication of CHF is called pulmonary edema, which can cause shortness of breath, hypoxemia, acidosis, respiratory arrest, and death. Although CHF is a chronic condition, the disease often requires acute hospital care. Patients are commonly admitted for acute pulmonary congestion accompanied by serious or severe shortness of breath. Acute care for congestive heart failure accounts for the use of more hospital days than any other cardiac diagnosis, and consumes in excess of 20 billion dollars in the United States annually.

Summary of the Invention

[0008] In one embodiment of the present invention, an apparatus for treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient is provided. The apparatus includes a sensor, an implantable cardiac rhythm management apparatus, an implantable lead, a signal processor, and a signaling device. The sensor is operable to generate a sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure within a left atrium of a heart. The cardiac rhythm management apparatus includes a housing and an electrode, where the electrode is operable to deliver an electrical stimulus to a location in the heart, and where the electrical stimulus is based at least in part on the sensor signal. The implantable lead is coupled to the implantable housing and to the electrode. The signal processor is operable to generate a processor output indicative of a treatment, where the processor output is based at least in part on the sensor signal. The signaling device is operable to generate at least two treatment signals distinguishable from one another by the patient, where each signal is indicative of a therapeutic treatment and where the treatment signals are based at least in part on the processor output.

[0009] In another embodiment of the invention, an apparatus for treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient that includes a first sensor and a second sensor is provided. The first sensor is operable to generate a first sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure within the heart. The apparatus also includes a cardiac rhythm management apparatus to deliver at least one electrical stimulus to a location in the heart, where the electrical stimulus is based at least in part on the sensor signal. The apparatus also has at least one implantable lead that is coupled to the cardiac rhythm management apparatus. The apparatus further includes a signal processor, operable to generate a processor output indicative of a treatment, wherein the processor output is based at least in part on the first

sensor signal. The apparatus also has a signaling device, operable to generate at least two treatment signals distinguishable from one another by the patient, each signal indicative of a therapeutic treatment, and where the treatment signals are based at least in part on the processor output. The apparatus, in one embodiment, may include an electrode as part of the cardiac rhythm management apparatus.

[0010] In a further embodiment of the invention, an apparatus for treating cardiovascular disease is provided. The apparatus includes an implantable sensor module, operable to generate a sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure within the left atrium of a heart. The apparatus also has an implantable flexible lead connecting the sensor module to an implantable housing, where the housing has a telemetry apparatus configured to communicate the sensor signal through the patient's skin. The apparatus also includes an external telemetry device configured to communicate with the implantable apparatus. The apparatus further includes a signal processing apparatus operable to generate a signal indicative of an appropriate therapeutic treatment based at least in part on the sensor signal and a patient signaling device operable to generate at least two treatment signals distinguishable from one another by the patient, each treatment signal indicative of a therapeutic treatment.

[0011] In yet another embodiment, an apparatus for treating cardiovascular disease that includes a sensor, a cardiac rhythm management apparatus, a telemetry apparatus, at least one implantable lead, a signal processor, and a signaling device is provided. The sensor is operable to generate a pressure signal indicative of a fluid pressure within a left atrium of a heart. The cardiac rhythm management apparatus, the cardiac rhythm management apparatus includes an electrode which is operable to deliver at least one electrical stimulus to a location in the heart. The electrical stimulus is based at least in part on the pressure signal. The telemetry apparatus is operable to transmit the pressure signal to a location outside of the patient. The implantable lead is coupled to the electrode. The signal processor is operable to generate a processor output indicative of a therapeutic treatment, where the processor output is based at least in part on the pressure signal. The signaling device is operable to communicate the processor output to the medical patient.

[0012] In one embodiment of the invention, an apparatus for treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient is provided. The apparatus includes a sensor operable to generate a pressure signal indicative of one or more pressures, or pressure parameters within the heart, a telemetry apparatus operable to communicate the pressure signal to a location outside of the medical patient, and a signal processor operable to generate a treatment signal indicative of a therapeutic treatment. The treatment signal is based at least in part on the pressure signal. The apparatus also includes a signaling device operable to communicate the treatment signal to a user.

[0013] In yet another embodiment of the invention, an apparatus for treating or preventing cardiovascular disease is provided. The apparatus includes a sensing means for generating a signal indicative of one or more cardiac pressures, a means to deliver an electrical stimulus to the heart, a signal processor for generating a treatment signal indicative of a treatment, where the treatment signal is based at least in part on the pressure signal; at least one implantable lead coupled to the means to deliver an electrical stimulus, and a signaling means for communicating the treatment signal a user. In one embodiment, the sensing means includes a pressure transducer. In one embodiment, the means to deliver an electrical stimulus includes a pacemaker. In one embodiment, the means to deliver an electrical stimulus includes a defibrillator. In one embodiment, the signaling means includes a personal digital assistant.

[0014] In another embodiment of the invention, an apparatus for treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient is provided. The apparatus includes a sensor to generate a sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure within the left atrium and a cardiac rhythm management apparatus to deliver an electrical stimulus to the patient. The apparatus also includes a signal processor to generate a processor output indicative of a treatment, where the processor output is based at least in part on the sensor signal, and a signaling device to generate at least two treatment signals distinguishable from one another by the patient. Each signal indicates a therapeutic treatment and is based at least in part on the processor output.

[0015] In one embodiment of the present invention, a method of treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient is provided. The method includes the steps of

generating a sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure within a left atrium of a heart, delivering an electrical stimulus to the heart, generating a processor output indicative of a treatment to a signaling device, and providing at least two treatment signals to the medical patient. The electrical stimulus is based at least in part on the sensor signal. The processor output is based at least in part on the sensor signal. Each treatment signal is distinguishable from one another by the patient, and is indicative of a therapeutic treatment. At least one signal is based at least in part on the processor output. In one embodiment, the step of delivering an electrical stimulus includes using a pacemaker or a defibrillator.

[0016] In another embodiment, a method of treating cardiovascular disease is provided. The method includes generating a sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure within the heart and delivering an electrical stimulus to the patient, such as, for example, to a location in the heart. The method further includes providing a processor output indicative of a treatment, and providing at least two treatment signals to the medical patient. The electrical stimulus is based at least in part on the sensor signal. The processor output is based at least in part on the sensor signal. The treatment signals are distinguishable from one another by the patient and are based at least in part on the processor output.

[0017] In a further embodiment of the current invention, a method of treating cardiovascular disease that includes a telemetry device is provided. The method includes the steps of generating a sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure within a left atrium of a heart, and transmitting the sensor signal using an internal telemetry apparatus to an external telemetry device. The method further includes providing the sensor signal from the external telemetry device to a signal processor, processing the sensor signal to generate a treatment signal, and communicating the treatment signal to a user by providing at least two signals to the user.

[0018] In yet another embodiment of the invention, a method of determining fluid pressure within the left atrium of a medical patient's heart is provided. The method includes the steps of obtaining a sensor signal from the one or more implanted sensors in a medical patient by telemetry through the patient's skin, obtaining the atmospheric pressure, and determining an adjusted pressure signal. The adjusted pressure signal is based at least in part

upon the sensor signal and the obtained atmospheric pressure and substantially indicates the fluid pressure within the left atrium of the heart relative to the atmospheric pressure.

[0019] In another embodiment of the present invention, a method of treating or preventing cardiovascular disease in a medical patient using at least two sensors is provided. The method includes generating a first sensor signal indicative of a cardiac fluid pressure within the patient, and generating a second signal indicative of a physiological parameter. The method further includes delivering an electrical stimulus to the patient, where the electrical stimulus is based at least in part on the first sensor signal. The method also includes generating a processor output indicative of a treatment to a signaling device, where the processor output is based at least in part on the first sensor signal, and providing at least two treatment signals to the patient. The treatment signals are distinguishable from one another by the patient, are indicative of different therapeutic treatments, and are based at least in part on the processor output.

[0020] In another embodiment of the present invention, a method of treating cardiovascular disease using electrical pulses is provided. The method includes generating a sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure within a heart and delivering at least one electrical pulse to the patient, where the pulse delivery is based at least in part on the sensor signal. The method also includes providing a processor output to a signaling device, where the processor output is indicative of a therapeutic treatment, and where the processor output is based at least in part on the sensor signal. The method further includes providing a treatment signal to the medical patient, where the treatment signal is based at least in part on the processor output.

[0021] In one embodiment of the invention, a method for treating cardiovascular disease is provided. The method includes generating a pressure signal indicative of a fluid pressure within a heart and controlling the delivery of an electrical pulse from a pacemaker to the heart. The controlling step is based at least in part on the pressure signal. The method further includes communicating the pressure signal to a patient signaling apparatus located at least partially external to the medical patient. The method also includes processing the pressure signal with the patient signaling apparatus to determine a processor output indicative

of a therapeutic treatment, the therapeutic treatment based at least in part on the fluid pressure within the heart, and signaling the patient with the processor output.

[0022] In yet another embodiment of the invention, a method for treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient that includes the following steps is provided: generating a pressure signal indicative of a fluid pressure within a heart, communicating the pressure signal to location outside of the medical patient, generating a processor output indicative of a therapeutic treatment, where the processor output is based at least in part on the pressure signal, and communicating the processor output to the medical patient.

[0023] In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, a method for treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient includes generating a sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure within the left atrium, communicating the sensor signal to an external telemetry apparatus, and generating a processor output indicative of an appropriate therapeutic treatment based at least in part on the sensor signal. The method further includes signaling a patient with a patient signaling device. The signaling device is operable to generate at least two treatment signals distinguishable from one another by the patient, each treatment signal indicative of a therapeutic treatment, wherein each treatment signal is based at least in part on the processor output.

[0024] In several embodiments of the current invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes a cardiac rhythm management apparatus. In one embodiment, the cardiac rhythm management apparatus includes a pacemaker. In another embodiment, the cardiac rhythm management apparatus includes a defibrillator. In one embodiment, the cardiac rhythm management apparatus is controlled at least in part by one or more sensor signals, including, but not limited to, one or more pressure signals.

[0025] In one embodiment, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes an external patient advisory module. In one embodiment, the external patient advisory module includes an external telemetry device, a signal processor, and a signaling device. In one embodiment, the external patient advisory module includes a barometer configured to sense atmospheric pressure.

[0026] In several embodiments of the current invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes one or more sensors. In one

embodiment, the sensor includes a pressure transducer. In another embodiment, the sensor is in pressure communication with the left atrium. In one embodiment, the sensor is located in the atrial septum or the left atrium. In one embodiment, the sensor is placed in one or more of the following locations: a right atrial appendage, a left atrial appendage, a pulmonary artery, a pulmonary vein, a pulmonary capillary wedge position, a right ventricle, a left ventricle, a right atrium, an intrathoracic space, and a central vein. In one embodiment, the sensor includes a low compliance titanium foil. In one embodiment, the sensor includes at least one silicon strain gauge.

[0027] In several embodiments of the current invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes one or more sensor signals. In one embodiment, the sensor signal includes at least one pressure signal. In one embodiment, the pressure signal includes a central venous blood pressure, a peripheral arterial blood pressure and/or a left atrial pressure. In another embodiment, the pressure signal includes a parameter of a left atrial pressure. In one embodiment, the parameter is selected from the group including, but not limited to one or more of the following: mean left atrial pressure, temporally filtered left atrial pressure, heart rate, respiratory variation of left atrial pressure, and respiration rate. In another embodiment, the parameter is determined based upon at least one wave selected from the group including, but not limited to one or more of the following: an a wave, a v wave, and a c wave. In yet another embodiment, the parameter is determined based upon a parameter signal selected from the group including, but not limited to one or more of the following: a wave amplitude, a waveform rate of ascent, a waveform rate of descent, timing of a wave feature with respect to a cardiac cycle, timing of a wave feature with respect to another wave feature, time difference between an a wave and a c wave, time difference between an a wave and a v wave, and time difference between a v wave and a c wave. In one embodiment, the parameter is determined based upon at least one descent selected from the group including, but not limited to one or more of the following: an x descent, an x' descent, and a y descent. In another embodiment, the parameter is determined based upon a parameter signal selected from the group including, but not limited to one or more of the following: a descent amplitude, a descent rate of ascent, a descent rate of descent, timing of a descent feature with respect to a cardiac cycle, timing of a descent feature with

respect to another wave feature, time difference between an x descent and an x' descent, time difference between an x descent and a y descent, and time difference between an x' descent and a y descent. In one embodiment, the parameter is independent of ambient atmospheric pressure.

[0028] In one embodiment, the sensor signal is measured during an interval. In another embodiment, the sensor signal is sampled in response to an event, including but not limited to a detected event, a symptom, and/or an instruction.

[0029] In one embodiment, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease further includes a sensor module. The sensor module includes at least one sensor. In one embodiment, the sensor module has a cylindrical shape. In one embodiment, the sensor module has a length of about 8 mm, and a diameter of about 3 mm. In one embodiment, the sensor module has a length in a range between about 5 and 15 mm, and a diameter in a range between about 1 and 5 mm. In one embodiment, the sensor module is connected to at least one implantable lead. In another embodiment, the sensor module is coupled to an implantable housing with an additional lead. In one embodiment, the sensor is connected to the implantable housing. In yet another embodiment, the sensor module further includes electronics. In one embodiment, the electronics comprise an application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC) and/or an analog-to-digital converter. In a further embodiment, the electronics include circuitry for communicating a digital signal.

[0030] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease further includes a housing that is a flat oval shape. In one embodiment, the housing includes a first dimension and a second dimension, where the first dimension is about 30 mm and the second dimension is about 20 mm. In one embodiment, the housing is implanted near a shoulder in the medical patient or in an abdominal site. In another embodiment, the housing further includes an antenna or coil. In one embodiment, the housing further includes a power source.

[0031] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease has a signaling device that is at least partially located in the housing. In another embodiment, the apparatus further includes a telemetry apparatus. In

one embodiment, the telemetry apparatus is at least partially located within the housing. In one embodiment, the housing further includes a data memory.

[0032] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease has a signal processor that is located in an external apparatus outside of the patient's body. In one embodiment, the external apparatus includes an external telemetry apparatus. In one embodiment, the external telemetry apparatus includes, but is not limited to, a personal digital assistant, a computer, a radio frequency telemetry hardware module, and a coil antenna. In one embodiment, the telemetry apparatus is operable to communicate by reflected impedance of radio frequency energy. In a further embodiment, the telemetry apparatus is operable to communicate by frequency or amplitude shifting of radio frequency energy.

[0033] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes an external power source. In one embodiment, the power source provides power through radio frequency coupling. In one embodiment, the radio frequency includes, but is not limited to, frequencies of about 125 kHz, about 8192 Hz, about 10.9 kHz, and about 30 kHz.

[0034] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes a signal processor. The signal processor can be located inside the patient, on the patient, completely outside the patient, or partially in or on the patient. In one embodiment, the signal processor includes a personal digital assistant.

[0035] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes at least one implantable lead. In one embodiment, two leads are provided. In another embodiment, three leads are provided. In another embodiment, more than three leads are provided. In one embodiment, the lead includes a pacemaker lead. In one embodiment, the lead includes a defibrillator lead. In one embodiment, the lead carries a lead signal. In one embodiment, the lead signal includes, but is not limited to, an electrical signal, a hydraulic signal, an optical signal, and/or an ultrasonic signal, or some combination thereof. In one embodiment, the lead communicates the sensor signal to the implantable housing. In one embodiment, the sensor signal and the electrical stimulus are provided by the implantable lead. In another embodiment, the implantable lead

provides one or more power pulses between the implantable housing and the sensor. In one embodiment, the implantable lead provides a data signal between the implantable housing and the sensor. In one embodiment, the data signal includes, but is not limited to one or more of the following: a pressure signal, a non-pressure sensing signal, a pacing signal and a programming signal.

[0036] In one embodiment, the implantable flexible lead is upgradable. In one embodiment, the implantable flexible lead is configured to operate in a plurality of configurations. In one embodiment, the lead is configured to operate in a telemetry configuration. In another embodiment, the lead is configured to operate in a telemetry configuration and a cardiac management configuration. In a further embodiment, the implantable flexible lead is configured to operate in a telemetry configuration and a therapy configuration. In one embodiment, the implantable flexible lead includes electronics that automatically senses the appropriate configuration.

[0037] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes a signaling device. In one embodiment, the signaling device includes a personal digital assistant. In one embodiment, the signaling device includes, but is not limited to an electrical buzzer, an alarm, and/or a telephone. In one embodiment, the signaling device provides an audible signal. In one embodiment, the signaling device provides a visible signal.

[0038] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes processor output. In one embodiment, the processor output comprises a signal output from the signal processor. In one embodiment, the processor output comprises a signal output to the signaling device. In one embodiment, the processor output includes, but is not limited to text, numerical, and/or graphics display. In one embodiment, the processor output includes, but is not limited to codes and data.

[0039] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes at least one anchor. In one embodiment, the sensor package, or module, has anchoring mechanisms configured to anchor the sensor package within the atrial septum of a patient's heart. In another embodiment, one or more anchors are

used to position or hold one or more of the components described herein to a site within the patient.

[0040] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease further includes an automated therapy device. In one embodiment, the automated therapy device includes, but is not limited to, a dynamic prescription, a drug delivery unit, and/or a cardiac rhythm management apparatus. In one embodiment, the automated therapy device controls the AV interval of a dual chamber pacemaker. In one embodiment, the automated therapy device is at least partially controlled based upon parameters indicative of congestive heart failure. In another embodiment, the automated therapy device is at least partially controlled based upon parameters indicative of atrial fibrillation.

[0041] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes a signal processor that generates the processor output based in part on a physician's dynamic prescription. In one embodiment, the dynamic prescription includes at least two treatment instructions corresponding to at least two physiological conditions. In one embodiment, a physician workstation is provided that is configured to receive and store the dynamic prescription. In another embodiment, an interface for communicating the stored dynamic prescription from the physician workstation to the signal processor is provided.

[0042] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes the generation of at least one treatment signal. In one embodiment, the treatment signal includes a patient instruction. In one embodiment, the treatment signal is a numerical designation. In one embodiment, two treatment signals are provided. In one embodiment, both treatment signals are numerical designations. In one embodiment, the numerical designation is indicative of a pressure measurement. In one embodiment, the treatment signal is based at least in part on two or more physician instructions. In one embodiment, the treatment signal is provided to a user. In one embodiment, the user is a medical practitioner. In one embodiment the, the user is a patient. In one embodiment, the treatment signal is provided substantially simultaneously two or more users.

[0043] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease is configured to treat or prevent congestive heart failure.

[0044] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes one or more additional sensors in addition to a first sensor. In one embodiment, a range of about three sensors to about twenty sensors is provided. In one embodiment, more than twenty sensors are provided. In one embodiment, a first sensor and a second sensor is provided. In one embodiment, the first sensor and the second sensor are located within a sensor module. In one embodiment, the first sensor is implanted within the patient and the second sensor is located externally to the patient, either on the patient or completely independent of the patient. In one embodiment, the second sensor measures a physical dimension. The physical dimension includes, but is not limited to, a left atrial dimension, a left atrial cross-sectional area, a left atrial volume, a left ventricular dimension, a left ventricular cross-sectional area, and a left ventricular volume. In one embodiment, at least one of the sensors measures a parameter that includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following: electrical activity of the heart, a temperature, an atrial septum position, a velocity of a cardiac structure, an acceleration of a cardiac structure, an electrical resistance, a thoracic electrical impedance, a respiratory tidal volume, a respiratory rate, a respiratory minute volume, a total body weight, oxygen saturation, oxygen partial pressure, oxygen partial pressure in a left chamber of a heart, oxygen partial pressure in a right chamber of a heart, and cardiac output. In one embodiment, a single sensor measure two or more parameters and is multi-functional. In one embodiment, a second sensor includes an automated arterial pressure cuff or a weight scale.

[0045] The embodiments summarized above and described in greater detail below are useful for the treatment of cardiovascular disease, including congestive heart failure (CHF). CHF is an important example of a medical ailment currently not treated with timely, parameter-driven adjustments of therapy, but one that the inventors believe could potentially benefit greatly from such a strategy. Patients with chronic CHF are typically placed on fixed doses of four or five drugs to manage the disease. The drug regimen commonly includes but is not limited to diuretics, vasodilators such as ACE inhibitors or A2 receptor inhibitors, beta-

blockers such as Carvedilol, neurohormonal agents such as spironolactone, and inotropic agents usually in the form of cardiac glycosides such as, for example, Digoxin.

[0046] The inventors believe that it would be far more cost effective, and much better for the patient's health, if chronic CHF could be managed and controlled by the routine administration of appropriate outpatient oral drug therapy rather than by hospital treatment upon the manifestation of acute symptoms. As with all drugs, these agents are to be taken in doses sufficient to ensure their effectiveness. Problematically, however, over-treatment can lead to bradycardia, hypotension, renal impairment, hyponatremia, hypokalemia, worsening CHF, impaired mental functioning, and other adverse conditions. Adding to the challenge of maintaining proper drug dosage is the fact that the optimal dosage will depend on diet, particularly salt and fluid intake, level of exertion, and other variable factors. Adding further to the problem of managing this condition is the fact that patients frequently miss scheduled doses by forgetting to take pills on time, running out of medications, or deciding to stop medications without consulting their physician. It is important, therefore, that the patient's condition be monitored regularly and thoroughly, so that optimal or near optimal drug therapy can be maintained. Easily obtained measures of a patient's condition are known, such as weight, peripheral blood pressure, subcutaneous edema, temperature, and subjective measures such as fatigue and shortness of breath. Unfortunately, these measures either do not correlate well enough with specific physiological states to serve as a controlling parameter for therapy, or do correlate but change too late for adjustment of oral medications to be effective. Measures that do change specifically, sensitively, and early in response to changes in the patient's condition are known in the art of heart failure management, but monitoring these measures is problematic in that such monitoring typically involves inserting a catheter into the heart or central blood vessels, therefore requiring frequent visits with a caregiver, and resulting in discomfort, inconvenience, expense, and repeated risks.

[0047] The inventors believe that it would be advantageous, therefore, if methods and apparatus could be devised by which an outpatient's cardiovascular status in general, and congestive heart failure in particular, could be monitored routinely or continuously, without performing an invasive procedure each time, with attendance by a caregiver only when actually required. The inventors believe that it would be further advantageous if such

methods and apparatus included the ability to communicate diagnostic and treatment information promptly to the patient himself. Such feedback would allow the patient to continue or modify his medications, as prescribed by his physician or licensed caregiver, such that optimal therapeutic doses are achieved, generally without the direct intervention of his physician.

[0048] For some classes of drugs (e.g., beta blockers, digoxin, calcium antagonists, amiodorone, etc.), the optimal dose for treating heart failure may be associated with, or exaggerate, episodes of excessively lowered resting heart rate (bradycardia) or an inability to adequately increase heart rate in response the body's demand for augmented blood flow (cardiac output), such as occurs with exercise or stress. The latter condition is known as chronotropic incompetence. Inappropriately low heart rate causes fatigue, poor exercise tolerance, and in the worst cases, deteriorating kidney function, low blood pressure and shock. The risk of these potentially serious complications limits the dose of these beneficial drugs that can be safely prescribed.

[0049] It would be additionally advantageous, therefore, if the methods and apparatus for monitoring a patient's cardiovascular status in general, and congestive heart failure in particular, and notifying the patient to continue or modify his medications, could also provide electronic pacemaker stimulation of the heart as needed to prevent bradycardia or chronotropic incompetence as a side effect of these drugs.

[0050]. Several embodiments of the present invention provides these advantages, along with others that will be further understood and appreciated by reference to the written disclosure, figures, and claims included herein.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0051]. The structure and operation of the invention will be better understood with the following detailed description of embodiments of the invention, along with the accompanying illustrations, in which:

[0052] Figure 1 depicts apparatus suitable for practicing at least one embodiment of the invention.

[0053] Figure 2 depicts an implantable apparatus suitable for practicing another embodiment of the invention.

[0054] Figure 3 is a schematic of one embodiment of the electronics located within the implantable housing of the implantable apparatus illustrated in Figure 2.

[0055] Figure 4 is a system for treating cardiovascular disease.

[0056] Figure 5 is a block diagram of an external patient advisor/telemetry module for use in one embodiment of the present invention.

[0057] Figures 6A-6C provide a list of examples by which signals may be interpreted to facilitate diagnosis, prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease.

[0058] Figure 7 shows a table of cardiac and non-cardiac diagnostic states derivable from measurements at the intra-atrial septum.

[0059] Figure 8 shows the flexible lead of Figure 13. The sheath has been withdrawn to deploy the proximal distal anchors on the right and left atrial sides of the atrial septum, and a pressure sensing transducer is in fluid contact with the patient's left atrium.

[0060] Figure 9 depicts a method for anchoring a flexible electrical lead within the patient's heart.

[0061] Figure 10 is a schematic sectional view of a patient's heart illustrating an atrial septal puncture for implanting one embodiment of the current invention.

[0062] Figure 11 shows another method for anchoring a lead within the heart, which includes a helical screw for advancement into the patient's atrial septum.

[0063] Figure 12 shows the apparatus depicted in Figure 11, with a pressure sensing transducer in place in the patient's left atrium.

[0064] Figure 13 is a schematic sectional view of a patient's heart showing a part of an embodiment of the invention positioned therein.

[0065] Figure 14 shows the flexible lead of Figure 15 and Figure 16, with a pressure sensing transducer in place inside the patient's left atrium.

[0066] Figure 15 depicts a flexible lead including deployable anchors carried inside a removable sheath and placed through the atrial septum.

[0067] Figure 16 shows the flexible lead of Figure 15 with the sheath withdrawn to deploy the anchors on opposite sides of the atrial septum.

[0068] Figure 17 shows the correlation between the pulmonary capillary wedge pressure (PCW) referenced to atmospheric pressure (abscissa) and the differential pressure between the right atrium and PCW (PCW-RA).

[0069] Figure 18 illustrates typical normal pressure tracings.

[0070] Figure 19 provides a table of normal hemodynamic values.

[0071] Figure 20 shows a combination of one embodiment of the present invention with an implantable cardiac pacemaker, in which the sensor is a left atrial pressure sensor implanted in the intra-atrial septum, and the pacemaker leads are entirely separate from the pressure sensor lead.

[0072] Figure 21 shows the relationships between the electrocardiogram and the left atrial pressure tracing.

[0073] Figure 22 is a sensor package or module in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

[0074] Figure 23 is another sensor package or module in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0075] Figure 24 is a pulse timing diagram showing one embodiment for sensing one or more physiological parameters and performing cardiac pacing using a two-conductor digital sensor/pacemaker lead.

[0076] Figure 25 is a schematic showing one embodiment of circuitry that provides both pacing and physiological monitoring over a two-conductor pacemaker lead.

[0077] Figures 26A-D are schematics showing circuitry within a sensor module in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

[0078] Figure 27 is a schematic diagram depicting digital circuitry suitable for use in one embodiment of the invention.

[0079] Figure 28 is an implantable housing in accordance with one "Stand-Alone" embodiment of the invention.

[0080] Figure 29 is an implantable housing in accordance with one "CRM Combination" embodiment of the invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

[0081] In one embodiment of the present invention an apparatus for treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient is provided. The apparatus includes a sensor, an implantable housing, at least one implantable lead, a signal processor, and a signaling device. In one embodiment, the apparatus is a physiologically optimized dosimeter (POD), such as the HeartPOD® device developed by the Applicant. Cardiovascular disease, as used herein, shall be given its ordinary meaning, and shall also include high blood pressure, diabetes, coronary artery disease, valvular heart disease, congenital heart disease, arrhythmia, cardiomyopathy, and CHF.

[0082] In one embodiment of the present invention, a method of treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient is provided. The method includes the steps of generating a sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure within a left atrium of a heart, delivering an electrical stimulus to the heart, generating a processor output indicative of a treatment to a signaling device, and providing at least two treatment signals to the medical patient. The electrical stimulus is based at least in part on the sensor signal. The processor output is based at least in part on the sensor signal. Each treatment signal is distinguishable from one another by the patient, and is indicative of a therapeutic treatment. At least one signal is based at least in part on the processor output. In one embodiment, the step of delivering an electrical stimulus includes using a pacemaker or a defibrillator.

[0083] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes one or more sensors. In one embodiment, the sensor is designed to generate a sensor signal that is indicative of a fluid pressure within the left atrium of the patient's heart. As described herein, fluid pressure within the left atrium of a patient's heart is an excellent indicator for quantifying the severity of congestive heart failure, and for assessing the effectivity of drug therapy for treating congestive heart failure. A measurement of the fluid pressure within the left atrium of a patient's heart can be used for other clinical purposes as well, as described in greater detail below.

[0084] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes one more housing units. In one embodiment, the implantable housing of the apparatus includes a cardiac rhythm management (CRM)

apparatus, such as, for example, a pacemaker, or a defibrillator. The implantable housing generally includes various subassemblies for control, operation, processing, and communication. However, in some embodiments, any one or more of control, operation, processing, and communication may be performed by an assembly, or module that is not included with the implantable housing. In one embodiment, when implanted in the patient, the implantable housing contains a coil antenna and electronics to provide reflected impedance communications with an external device. However, the implantable housing may be subsequently accessed, and the coil antenna may be removed and replaced with a CRM. The implantable housing and electronics may include an interface that permits such interchangeability of components within the implantable housing without requiring explantation of the remaining components of the congestive heart failure treatment apparatus. These and additional embodiments of the implantable housing as well as the apparatus are provided in greater detail below.

[0085] In one embodiment, the lead couples the sensor to the implantable housing, and provides an electrical conduit for the transmission of the sensor signal from the sensor to the housing. In other embodiments, however, as described in greater detail below, the lead provides an electrical stimulus, such as, for example, an electrical pulse, to a location in the heart, as determined by the CRM apparatus. In some embodiments, the electrical stimulus and the sensor signal are transmitted through the same lead, and in other embodiments, more than one lead is provided. In yet another embodiment, energy or power is transmitted from the implantable housing through the lead to a distal module that may contain a CRM, sensor, and electronics necessary to control the congestive heart treatment apparatus. These and other embodiments are described in greater detail below.

[0086] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes one or more signal processors. In one embodiment, the signal processor determines a processor output that is indicative of an appropriate therapeutic treatment in response to the pressure-indicative signal provided by the sensor. The processor output is provided to a signaling device, which provides an appropriate treatment signal to the medical patient. The term "processor output" as used herein shall be given its ordinary meaning and shall also mean output from a signal processor and/or input to

a signaling device, and shall include, but not be limited to, signals, including analog, digital, and/or optical signals, data, code, and/or text. The treatment signal may be provided by, for example, vibrating a signaling device located within the implantable housing. Alternatively, the treatment signal may be generated within the implantable housing and transmitted to a signaling device located external to the patient, such as a personal digital recorder (PDA). In another embodiment, the sensor signal is transmitted to an external device, such as, for example, a PDA, which includes a processor and signaling device to generate a processor output and provide a treatment signal to the patient. These and other embodiments are described in greater detail below.

[0087] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes one or more signaling devices. In one embodiment, the signaling device includes a buzzer, an alarm, a display, a computer, a telephone, or a PDA, such as a Palm Pilot, or Handspring Visor. The signaling device may be operable to generate at least two treatment signals distinguishable from one another by the patient. In one embodiment, each signal is indicative of a different therapeutic treatment. The treatment signal may be an electrical pulse, a vibration, a noise, audio or visual data, including, but not limited to, instructions on a display screen or light emitting diodes. In one embodiment, the at least two treatment signals may include two numerical values or designations, a numerical value and an electrical pulse or vibration, multiple vibrations of varying amplitudes, durations, or frequencies, or any combination of two or more of any of the treatment signals described herein. In one embodiment, the signaling device is a PDA that displays an instruction, such as “take medication,” “rest,” or “call Doctor”. These and other embodiments are described in greater detail below.

I. THE SYSTEM

A. Stand-Alone system

[0088] FIG. 1 shows an apparatus for treating cardiovascular disease, such as congestive heart failure, which includes an implantable module 5 in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The implantable module 5 includes a housing 7 and a flexible, electrically conductive lead 10. The lead 10 is connectable to the housing 7 through a connector 12 that may be located on the exterior of the housing. In one embodiment, the

housing 7 is outwardly similar to the housing of an implantable electronic defibrillator and/or pacemaker system. Defibrillator and pacemaker systems are implanted routinely in medical patients for the detection and control of tachy- and bradyarrhythmias. The flexible lead 10 is also generally similar to leads used in defibrillator and pacemaker systems, except that a compact sensor package 15 is disposed at or near the distal end 17 of the lead 10, the opposite end from the connector 12 on the housing 7. The sensor package 15 contains sensors to measure one or more physical parameters. An electrical signal or another form of signal indicative of these physical parameters is then transmitted along the lead 10 through the connector 12 and to the housing 7. The housing 7 includes a signal processor (not shown) to process the signal received from the sensor package 15 via the lead 10. In addition, the housing 7 may include telemetry or signaling devices (not shown), to either communicate with an external device, or signal the patient, or both. The elements inside the housing 7 may be configured in various ways, as described below, to communicate to the patient a signal, such as a treatment signal, indicative of an appropriate therapy or treatment based at least in part on one or more of the measured physical parameters.

[0089] FIG. 2 shows another embodiment in which the sensor package or module 15 has distal 68 and proximal 70 anchoring mechanisms configured to anchor the sensor package 15 within the atrial septum of a patient's heart. FIG. 2 shows one embodiment of the implanted internal module 5, in which the implanted internal module 5 includes a physiologic sensor package or module 15. The physiologic sensor package 15 includes one or more sensors (not shown) and their accompanying electronics (not shown). The implanted module 5 also includes a flexible lead 10. The flexible lead 10 has a distal end 17 and an indifferent electrode 14. A header or connector 12 connects the flexible lead 10 and housing 7 of the implanted module 5. The housing 7 contains electronics (not shown) and other components (not shown) for communicating with an external module (not shown). One embodiment showing the contents of the housing 7 is illustrated in FIG. 3.

[0090] As shown in FIG. 3, in one embodiment housing 7 includes a power supply, a CRM, and a signal processing and patient signaling modules. The CRM is configured to provide an electrical stimulus, such as a pacing signal, to the patient's heart, and receive a sensor signal from implanted sensors (not shown). In one embodiment, the

CRM is configured to control a defibrillator. The signal processing module is coupled to at least one sensor that provides a signal indicative of the fluid pressure within the left atrium of the heart. The signal processing module may also be configured to control a distally implanted CRM, or sensor package or module, as described in greater detail herein.

[0091] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease at least one housing. In one embodiment, the housing includes a shape that is flat and oval. In another embodiment, the shape is cylindrical, rectangular, elliptical, or spherical. One of skill in the art will understand that a variety of other shapes suitable for implantation can also be used. In one embodiment, the housing is about 20 mm by about 30 mm, about 10 mm by about 20 mm, or about 5 mm by about 10 mm. In one embodiment, the housing is about 5 mm thick. In one embodiment, the housing is implanted in the medical patient near the shoulder. In another embodiment, the housing has dimensions suitable for containing at least some components for controlling, powering and/or communicating with a pacemaker and suitable for implantation inside of the body, as is well known to those of skill in the art. In another embodiment, the housing includes: an antenna, or a coil; a power source, including but not limited to a battery or a capacitor; a signal processor; a telemetry apparatus; a data memory; or a signaling device. In one embodiment, the apparatus is powered by an external power source through inductive, acoustical, or radio frequency coupling. In one embodiment, power is provided using electromagnetic emissions emitted from an electrical coil located outside the body. In one embodiment, power and data telemetry are provided by the same energy signal. In another embodiment, an electrical coil is implanted inside the body at a location under the skin near the patient's collarbone. In another embodiment, an electrical coil is implanted inside the patient's body at other locations. For example, in one embodiment, the coil is implanted under the skin in the lower abdomen, near the groin. One of skill in the art will understand that the device can be implanted in a variety of other suitable locations.

[0092] As described above and in other embodiments herein, a system for treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient may include at least one physiological sensor used to generate a signal indicative of a physiological parameter on or in the patient's body. The system includes signal processing apparatus operable to generate a signal, such as a processor

output, indicative of an appropriate therapeutic treatment, which is based upon the signal generated by the physiological sensor. In one embodiment, the system also includes a patient signaling device, which is used to communicate the signal indicative of the appropriate therapeutic treatment, such as a treatment signal, to the patient.

[0093] In one embodiment, the physiological sensor is a pressure transducer that is positioned to measure pressures within the patient's left atrium. Signals from the pressure sensor are monitored continuously or at appropriate intervals. Information is then communicated to the patient corresponding to appropriate physician-prescribed drug therapies. In one embodiment, the information is the treatment signal. In many cases, the patient may administer the drug therapies to him or herself without further diagnostic intervention from a physician.

[0094] FIG. 4 shows one embodiment of a system for treating cardiovascular disease 9. The system 9 includes an implantable module 5, such as that described with reference to FIG. 2, and an external patient advisory module 6, such as that described below with reference to FIG. 5. During system 9 operation, radio frequency signals are carried by a lead 10 between a pressure sensor package 15 located near the distal end 17 of the lead 10, and a housing 7 of an implantable module 5. The lead 10 includes an indifferent electrode 14. The circuitry inside the housing 7 includes an antenna coil (not shown). In this embodiment, signals are communicated between the implantable module 5 and an external device, such as a patient advisory module 6, via the antenna coil of the housing 7 and a second external coil (not shown) coupled to the external device 6.

[0095] In one embodiment, the housing 7 contains a battery (not shown) that powers the implantable device 5. In another embodiment, the implanted device 5 receives power and programming instructions from the external device 6 via radio frequency transmission between the external and internal coils. The external device 6 receives signals indicative of one or more physiological parameters from the implanted device 5 via the coils as well. One advantage of such externally powered implantable device 5 is that the patient will not require subsequent surgery to replace a battery. In one embodiment of the present invention, power is required only when the patient or the patient's caregiver initiates a reading. In other situations, where it is desired to obtain physiological information

continuously, or where it is desired that the implanted device 5 also perform functions with higher or more continuous power requirements, the housing 7 may also contain one or more batteries. As described below, the housing 7 may also contain circuitry to perform additional functions that may be desirable.

[0096] **FIG. 5** shows one embodiment of a patient advisory module 6. In one embodiment, the patient advisory module 6 includes a palm-type computer with added hardware and software. Referring to **FIG. 5**, a patient advisory module 6 includes a radio frequency telemetry module 164 with an associated coil antenna 162, which is coupled to a processing unit 166. In one embodiment, the processing unit 166 includes a palm-type computer, or personal digital assistant (PDA), as is well known to those of skill in the art. In one embodiment, the patient advisory module 6 powers the implanted apparatus (not shown) with the telemetry hardware module 164 and coil antenna 162. In another embodiment, the patient advisory module 6 receives physiological signals from the implanted apparatus by wireless telemetry through the patient's skin.

[0097] The patient advisory module 6 may include an RF unit 168 and a barometer 112 for measuring the reference atmospheric pressure. In one embodiment, the RF unit 168 and barometer are located within the telemetry module 164, although they can be integrated with the processing unit 166 as well. The signal processing unit can be used to analyze physiologic signals and to determine physiologic parameters. The patient advisory module 166 may also include data storage, and a sub-module that contains the physician's instructions to the patient for therapy and how to alter therapy based on changes in physiologic parameters. The parameter based physician's instructions are typically referred to as "the dynamic prescription." The instructions are communicated to the patient via the signaling module 166, or another module. The patient advisory module 166 is located externally and used by the patient or his direct caregiver. It may be part of system integrated with a personal digital assistant, a cell phone, or a personal computer, or as a Stand-Alone device. In one embodiment, the external patient advisory module comprises an external telemetry device, a signal processing apparatus, and a patient signaling device. In one embodiment, the patient advisory module is operable to obtain the sensor signal from the implantable sensor by telemetry through the patient's skin; obtain the atmospheric pressure

from the barometer; and adjust the sensor signal indicative of a fluid pressure based at least in part upon the atmospheric pressure obtained by the barometer so that the adjusted sensor signal indicates the fluid pressure within the left atrium of the heart relative to the atmospheric pressure.

[0098] In one embodiment, the physiologic signals are analyzed and used to determine adjustable prescriptive treatment instructions that have been placed in the patient advisory module 6 by the patient's personal physician. Communication of the prescriptive treatment instructions to the patient may appear as written or graphic instructions on a display of the patient advisory module 6. These treatment instructions may include what medications to take, dosage of each medication, and reminders to take the medications at the appropriate times. In one embodiment, the patient advisory module 6 displays other physician-specified instructions, such as "Call M.D." or "Call 911" if monitored values become critical.

[0099] A third module of this embodiment is designed for physician use. The third module is used to program the dynamic prescription and communicate it or load it into the patient advisory module 166. The third module may also contain stored data about the patient, including historical records of the physiologic signals and derived parameters transmitted from the patient implant and signaling modules. The third module may also communicate with external databases. In one embodiment, the third module is a physician input device, and includes a personal computer, a PDA, a telephone, or any other such device as is well known to those of skill in the art.

[0100] In one embodiment, the second module (*e.g.*, the patient advisory module 166) is in the form of one or more implants.

[0101] In one embodiment of the present invention, the first implant module (such as, for example, implantable module 5 of **FIG. 1** and **FIG. 2**) may also contain an implant therapy unit, or ITU. The ITU generates an automatic therapy regime based upon the programmed dynamic prescription. The therapy may include, but is not limited to, a system for releasing bioactive substances from an implanted reservoir, a system for controlling electrical pacing of the heart, and controllers for ventricular or other types of cardiac assist devices. For example, in one embodiment the sensor package is placed across the intra-atrial

septum and serves as the atrial lead of a multichamber pacemaker. The physiologic sensor information is used to adjust pacing therapy such that pacing is performed only when needed to prevent worsening heart failure. One skilled in the art will appreciate that many systems or devices that control the function of the cardiovascular system may be used in accordance with several embodiments of the current invention.

[0102] In one embodiment of the invention, the advisory module 6 is programmed to signal the patient when it is time to perform the next cardiac status measurement and to take the next dose of medication. It will be recognized by those skilled in managing CHF patients that these signals may help the many patients who have difficulty taking their medication on schedule. Although treatment prescriptions may be complex, one embodiment of the current invention simplifies them from the patient's perspective by providing clear instructions. To assure that information regarding the best treatment is available to physicians, professional cardiology organizations such as the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology periodically publish updated guidelines for CHF therapy. These recommendations can serve as templates for the treating physician to modify to suit individual patient requirements. In one embodiment, the device routinely uploads data to the physician or clinic, so that the efficacy of the prescription and the response to parameter driven changes in dose can be monitored. This enables the physician to optimize the patient's medication dosage and other important treatments without the physician's moment-to-moment intervention.

[0103] In various embodiment of the invention, a device and method for dynamically diagnosing and treating cardiovascular illness in a medical patient are provided. In one embodiment, at least one physiological sensor is used to generate a signal indicative of a physiological parameter. In another embodiment, signal processing apparatus operable to generate a signal indicative of an appropriate therapeutic treatment based, at least in part, upon the signal generated by the physiological sensor, is also provided. In another embodiment a patient signaling device used to communicate the signal indicative of the appropriate therapeutic treatment to the patient is provided as well.

[0104] In one embodiment, a device and method for continuously or routinely monitoring the condition of a patient suffering from chronic cardiovascular disease are

provided. As will be described in detail below, a system incorporating various embodiments of the invention monitors various physiologic parameters, such as the patient's left atrial pressure. Depending upon the magnitude of or changes in this pressure, for example, the system communicates a signal to the patient indicative of a particular course of therapy appropriate to manage or correct, as much as possible, the patient's chronic condition. In some embodiments, physician instructions and automated therapy are provided.

[0105] In one embodiment, the physiological sensor generates a signal indicative of a physiological parameter on or in the patient's body. In one embodiment, the signal processing apparatus generates a signal indicative of an appropriate therapeutic treatment based at least in part upon the signal generated by the physiological sensor. The patient signaling device may generate signals indicative of therapeutic treatments or courses of action the patient can take to manage or correct, as much as possible, the patient's condition.

[0106] In one embodiment, this method includes the steps of implanting one or more physiological sensors substantially permanently within the patient, operating the physiological sensor to generate a signal indicative of a physiological parameter, processing this physiological signal to generate a signal indicative of an appropriate therapeutic treatment, and communicating the appropriate therapeutic treatment to a user. In one embodiment, the user includes, but is not limited to, the patient, a caregiver, a medical practitioner or a data collection center.

[0107] In another embodiment, the system is combined with or incorporated into a CRM system, with or without physiologic rate control, and with or without backup cardioversion/defibrillation therapy capabilities.

[0108] In one embodiment, at least one indication of congestive heart failure (CHF) is monitored. Elevated pressure within the left atrium of the heart is the precursor of fluid accumulation in the lungs, which results in signs and symptoms of acute CHF. Mean left atrial pressure in healthy individuals is normally less than or equal to twelve millimeters of mercury (mm Hg). Patients with CHF that have been medically treated and clinically "well compensated" may generally have mean left atrial pressures in the range from 12 to 20 mm Hg. Transudation of fluid into the pulmonary interstitial spaces can be expected to occur when the left atrial pressure is above about twenty-five mm Hg, or at somewhat more than

about thirty mm Hg in some patients with chronic CHF. Pulmonary edema has been found to be very reliably predicted by reference to left atrial pressures and less well correlated with conditions in any other chamber of the heart. Thus, the methods and apparatus of several embodiments of the invention may prove very useful in treating and preventing pulmonary edema and other adverse conditions associated with CHF. Pressure in the pulmonary veins, pulmonary capillary wedge position, and left ventricular end diastolic pressure (LVEDP) are generally indicative of left atrial pressure and are commonly used as surrogates of LAP. There are, however, specific conditions, that are well known to those skilled in the art, including cardiologists and physiologists, where these surrogates vary substantially from LAP and may be less predictive of impending heart failure. One example of such a condition is mitral valve stenosis where pulmonary edema develops despite a normal LVEDP due to a significant pressure gradient across the mitral valve. Other surrogate pressures that also, on specific occasion, indicate LAP include, but are not limited to: the pulmonary artery diastolic (PAD) or algorithms that estimate PAD from the right ventricular waveform, the right ventricular end diastolic, and the right atrial pressure.

[0109] An embodiment of the invention includes a permanently implanted device designed to define the presence of worsening CHF hours to days before the onset of symptoms and to provide for early preventative treatment according to the physician's individualized prescription. As such, an embodiment of the invention includes an integrated patient therapeutic system that determines therapeutic dosages for an individual patient based at least in part on internal physiologic signals. In another embodiment, the system consists of a small implantable sensor device and an external patient advisory module comprising a personal data assistant (PDA) and a telemetry module. The sensor system may be implanted into the patient's left atrial chamber by a transseptal catheterization procedure. There are already several thousand physicians in the U.S. and abroad with the experience and skills required for such device implantation. The implantation procedure can be performed on an outpatient basis in a hospital's cardiac catheterization laboratory. The implant may alternatively be placed at the time of open-heart or minimally invasive valve or bypass surgery where the surgeon, under direct or laparoscopic vision, positions the device in the left atrium, left atrial appendage, or an adjacent pulmonary vein.

[0110] In one embodiment, the sensor system measures a left atrial pressure waveform, core body temperature and a cardiac electrogram, such as the intra cardiac electrogram (IEGM). Elevated left atrial pressure is the most accurate predictor of impending CHF, often preceding clinical symptoms by hours to days. Other embodiments of the left atrial pressure waveform may be used to diagnose a number of conditions, as listed in FIGS. 6A-6C. Core temperature is often depressed in acute CHF, but elevated prior to the development of fever in response to an infection, making core temperature a useful parameter for differentiating between these common conditions with similar symptoms but which require different treatments. The intracardiac electrogram may be useful in diagnosing arrhythmias and precipitating causes of worsening CHF.

[0111] FIG. 7 shows how left and right atrial pressure measurements may be combined with IEGM and core temperature measurement to diagnose a number of cardiac and non-cardiac conditions. The list of diagnostic states in FIG. 7 is exemplary, and by no means exhaustive of all the potential diagnostic states definable by the given parameters. Multiple states can exist simultaneously, for example, moderate CHF and rapid atrial fibrillation. The measured parameters can be used over large populations to define the probability of any given diagnostic state. Each diagnostic state may have a unique treatment. For example, mild CHF may be treated by increasing diuretic therapy, whereas rapid atrial fibrillation is treated with a drug that blocks AV node conduction. Many of the states listed can contribute to worsening CHF.

1. **Implantation and Anchoring**

a. **Placement and anchoring in the left atrium**

[0112] In one embodiment, such as that illustrated in FIG. 8, an implantable device is implanted percutaneously in the patient by approaching the left atrium 36 through the right atrium 30, penetrating the patient's atrial septum 41 and positioning one or more physiological sensors 15 in the atrial septum 41, on the septal wall of the left atrium 36, or inside the patient's left atrium 36. FIG. 8 shows an embodiment in which a sensor package 15 is deployed across the atrial septum 41. The sensor lead 10 is coupled to a physiological sensor or sensors 15 and anchoring apparatus at the lead 10 distal end. The anchoring apparatus includes a distal foldable spring anchor 68 that expands in diameter upon release

and is located at or near the distal tip of the sensor 15, and a proximal foldable spring anchor 70. The distal and proximal anchors 68, 70 are sufficiently close together that when deployed the two anchors 68, 70 sandwich the intra-atrial septum 41 between them, thus fixing the sensor/lead system to the septal wall. The intra-atrial septum 41 is typically between about 1 and about 10 mm thick. In one embodiment, the anchors 68, 70 are made of a highly elastic biocompatible metal alloy such as superelastic nitinol. The lead 10 may contain a lumen that exits the lead 10 at its proximal end. A stiffening or bending stylet can be insert in the lumen to aid in passage of the sensor(s) and lead 15, 10. After a transseptal catheterization has been performed, a sheath/dilator system of diameter sufficient to allow passage of the sensor/lead system is placed from a percutaneous insertion site over a guidewire until the distal end of a sheath 67 is in the left atrium 36. Left atrial position can be confirmed under fluoroscopy by contrast injection, or by the pressure waveform obtained when the sheath 67 is connected to a pressure transducer. To aid the procedure, the sheath 67 may include a proximal hemostasis valve to minimize air entrainment during device insertion. A side port with a stopcock is useful to aspirate any remaining air and to inject radiographic contrast material. Additionally, later sheath 67 removal may be facilitated by using a "peel-away" type of sheath. These features of vascular sheaths are commercially available and well know to those familiar with the art. With the spring anchors 68, 70 folded and forming a system with minimal diameter, the system is loaded into the sheath 67 and advanced until the distal spring 68 just exits the sheath 67 in the left atrium 36 and is thus deployed to its sprung diameter. The sheath 67 is carefully withdrawn without deploying the proximal anchor 70 and the sheath 67 and sensor/lead system are withdrawn as a unit while contrast is injected through the sheath 67 around the sensor lead until contrast is visible in the right atrium 30. The proximal sheath 67 is further withdrawn, allowing the proximal anchor 70 to spring to its unloaded larger diameter, thus fixing the distal portion of the sensor lead to the septum 41.

[0113] It will also be apparent that, in several embodiments, a similar sensor/lead system can be inserted through an open thoracotomy or a minimally invasive thoracotomy, with the anchoring system fixating the sensor/lead to a location such as the free wall of the

left atrium, the left atrial appendage, or a pulmonary vein, all of which provide access to pressures indicative of left atrial pressure.

[0114] In one alternative embodiment, a flexible lead 10 is partially advanced into a pulmonary vein 50 connected to the left atrium 36 such that one or more physiological sensors 15 disposed on the flexible lead 10 a predetermined distance from its distal end 17 are positioned within the left atrium 36 or the pulmonary vein 50, as shown in **FIG. 9**. In another embodiment, the distal portion 17 of the flexible lead 10 is partially advanced into the left atrial appendage such that anchoring apparatus will be occlusive of the appendage, for example as taught by Lesh et al. in U.S. Patent No. 6,152,144, incorporated by reference herein. The physiologic sensors 15 are positioned on the lead 10 proximal to the occlusive anchors so that they sense conditions in the left atrium.

[0115] In other embodiments, such as those shown in **FIG. 12** and **FIG. 14**, a first lead component 53 includes an anchoring apparatus, for example, a helical screw 57, which is advanced to the atrial septum 41. The anchoring apparatus is deployed to anchor the first lead component 53 into the patient's atrial septum 41. A second lead component 60 includes a physiological sensor, for example, a pressure transducer 62, which is advanced along the first lead component 53 until the second lead component 60 is in a position such that the physiological sensor is positioned within the patient's left atrium 36.

b. Implantation in the Left Atrium

[0116] Referring to the embodiment depicted in **FIG. 8**, the system is implanted through the left atrial septum 41 such that the pressure sensor 15 is exposed to the pressure in the left atrial chamber 36 of the heart. The left atrial septum 41 can be accessed from the right atrium 30 through the inferior or superior vena cava 35, 28, as is well known to those skilled in the arts of, for example, pacemaker lead placement, catheter ablation for control of arrhythmias originating in the left atrium or pulmonary veins, percutaneous repair of the mitral valve, and percutaneous closure of an atrial septal defect. In one embodiment, the flexible lead 10 and pressure transducer 15 are anchored to the atrial septum 41. This placement can be achieved using vascular access techniques that are well-known to those familiar with the performance of invasive cardiovascular procedures, in particular, interventional cardiologists, electrocardiologists, and cardiovascular surgeons. These

procedures are commonly performed with the aid of visualization techniques, including standard fluoroscopy, cardiac ultrasound, or other appropriate visualization techniques used alone or in combination.

[0117] Access to the central venous circulation may be achieved by use of the standard Seldinger technique through the left or right subclavian vein, the right or left internal jugular vein, or the right or left cephalic vein. Alternatively, access may be made via the Seldinger technique into the right femoral vein. In either case, a Brockenbrough catheter and needle are used to pierce the atrial septum 41 for access to the left atrium 36, as described below.

i. **Superior Venous Access (Subclavian or Internal Jugular Vein)**

[0118] FIG. 10 provides a schematic sectional view of the patient's heart 33 and shows the apparatus used to access the left atrium 36. FIG. 10 depicts an access assembly 18 comprising a Brockenbrough catheter 20 inside a sheath 22, with a flexible guidewire 25 residing within the Brockenbrough catheter 20. As FIG. 10 indicates, the access assembly has been placed through the superior vena cava 28 into the right atrium 30 of the heart 33. FIG. 10 also shows the inferior vena cava 35, the left atrium 36, the right ventricle 37, the left ventricle 40, the atrial septum 41 that divides the two atria 30, 36, and the valves 42 between the right atrium 30 and right ventricle 37, and the left atrium 36 and left ventricle 40. The reader will appreciate that the view of FIG. 10 is simplified and somewhat schematic, but that nevertheless FIG. 10 and the other views included herein will suffice to illustrate adequately the placement and operation of an embodiment of the present invention.

ii. **Placement of the Lead**

[0119] With the access assembly 18 in place within the right atrium 30, the Brockenbrough catheter 20 is used to pierce the atrial septum 41 by extending the Brockenbrough needle (not shown) through the atrial septum 41 into the left atrium 36. In the figures, the atrial septum 41 has been pierced by the needle, the catheter 20 has been advanced over the needle, and the needle has been withdrawn from the catheter 20, leaving the catheter 20 in place inside the left atrium 36. Optionally, a guidewire 25 may be advanced through the needle into the left atrium 36 before or after advancing the catheter 20,

or it may be placed into the left atrium 36 through the catheter 20 alone after the needle has been withdrawn. A lead placement procedure is described above.

[0120] As indicated by the arrows 45 in **FIG. 10**, the sheath 22 may extend into the left atrium 36, or it may remain on the proximal side of the atrial septum 41 within the right atrium 30. **FIG. 10** shows the guidewire 25 extended from the end of the Brockenbrough catheter 20 to secure continuous access into the left atrium 36. As depicted therein, the guidewire 25 has a curled, “pig-tail” style distal tip 48 to better secure the guidewire 25 within the left atrium 36 and to safeguard against inadvertent withdrawal through the atrial septum 41. Alternatively, a “floppy tip” guide wire may be used, which can be safely advanced well into one of the pulmonary veins, again to safeguard against inadvertent withdrawal through the atrial septum 41. Once the guidewire 25 is securely in place in the left atrium 35, the Brockenbrough catheter 20 may be withdrawn so that the flexible lead 10 may be placed through the peel-away sheath 22.

[0121] With the guidewire 25 securely in place with its distal tip 48 inside the left atrium 36, the flexible lead 10 may be advanced into the left atrium 36. The flexible lead 10 might itself include a central lumen configured to receive the proximal end of the guidewire 25, thereby allowing the flexible lead 10 to be advanced down the guidewire 25 toward the left atrium 36. More commonly, an exchange catheter, which may be in the form of a peel-away sheath 22, will be advanced down the guidewire 25 and placed into the left atrium 36, the guidewire 25 may then be withdrawn, after which the flexible lead 10 will be advanced down the exchange catheter and into position.

[0122] In one embodiment, a peel-away sheath 22 is used to allow the sheath to be removed once the distal end of the lead 10 is implanted. The peel-away feature is not used if the proximal end of the lead 10 is detachable from the coil housing assembly (described above). In this case, a non-peel-away sheath with proximal hemostasis valve and side port as described above can be used, and simply slid off the proximal end of the lead 10 prior to attaching the lead 10 to the coil/housing assembly.

iii. Anchoring the Sensor and Lead

[0123] Once the pressure transducer 15 of the flexible lead 10 is positioned within the left atrium 36, the lead 10 should be anchored in place to ensure that the pressure transducer 15 stays reliably and permanently in the desired location.

[0124] One method for anchoring the flexible lead 10 in place is depicted in FIG. 9, which is a somewhat schematic depiction of the major structures of the heart. FIG. 9 shows the four pulmonary veins 50 that connect to the left atrium 36. In the particular apparatus depicted in FIG. 9, the flexible lead 10 includes a pressure transducer 15 located on the body of the lead 10 a predetermined distance proximal of the distal end 17 of the lead 10.

[0125] Referring back to FIG. 9, the distal end 17 of the flexible lead 10 in this embodiment can be bent by the operator in much the same way as a distal tip such as might be found on a steerable angioplasty guidewire or another similar device. This feature assists the operator in steering the flexible lead 10 into a selected one of the pulmonary veins 50, with the pressure transducer 15 disposed within the interior space of the left atrium 36, or even within the pulmonary vein itself. Placement of the pressure transducer 15 within the pulmonary vein is effective because pressures within the pulmonary vein are very close to pressures within the left atrium. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that visualization markers (not shown) may be provided at appropriate locations on the flexible lead 10 to assist the operator in placing the device as desired. With the flexible lead 10 in place as shown, the body's own natural healing mechanism may permanently anchor the flexible lead 10 in place both at the penetration site through the atrial septum 41, and where the flexible lead 10 contacts the interior surface of the pulmonary vein 50 in which the tip of the lead 10 resides. The pressure transducer 15 might also be placed at locations such as the left atrial appendage (not shown in FIG. 9) where the pressure is nearly the same as the left atrium 36, or the left ventricular cavity, where at identifiable phases of the cardiac cycle the pressure is momentarily nearly the same as that in the left atrium 36.

[0126] FIG. 11 and FIG. 12 show alternative methods and devices for anchoring the pressure transducer 15 in a location appropriate for measuring pressures within the left atrium 36. The lead in this embodiment includes a helical screw 57 for anchoring the lead to

the atrial septum 41. Similar configurations are used in some leads for pacemakers and thus may be familiar to those skilled in the art.

[0127] Referring now specifically to FIG. 11, the guidewire 25 is shown positioned across the atrial septum 41 between the left atrium 36 and the right atrium 30. A first lead component 53 is delivered over the guidewire through an appropriate guiding catheter 55 or sheath. This first lead component 53 includes a helical screw 57 on its exterior surface. The helical screw 57 is advanced into the tissue of the atrial septum 41 by applying torque to the shaft of the first lead component 53. The helical screw 57 could also be coupled to a hollow or solid cylindrical mandrel (not shown), or to a spirally wound mandrel (also not shown) disposed along substantially the entire length of the first lead component. When the helical screw 57 has been turned and advanced sufficiently into the atrial septum 41, the guidewire 25 and guiding catheter may then be withdrawn leaving the first lead component 53 anchored securely in place.

iv. Two-component Lead with optional Second Pressure Transducer

[0128] In one embodiment, a second lead component 60 is advanced as shown in FIG. 12 through a central lumen in the first lead component 53. The first and second lead components 53, 60 are sized and configured so that when the second lead component 60 is fully advanced with respect to the first lead component 53, a left atrial pressure transducer 62 at the end of the second lead component 60 protrudes by an appropriate predetermined amount into the left atrium 36. In one embodiment, the second lead component 60 is then securely fixed with respect to the first lead component 53.

[0129] It should be noted that the embodiments depicted in FIG. 11 and FIG. 12 includes a second pressure transducer 65 on the exterior of the first lead component 53 that may be exposed to pressure within the right atrium 30. This illustrates, in a simplified way, the general principle, in which a pressure transducer is used to measure fluid pressure within the left atrium; but in which one or more additional transducers or sensors may also be used to detect a physiologic condition other than left atrial pressure. These physiologic conditions may include pressures in locations other than the left atrium 36, and physical parameters other than pressure.

v. Alternative Anchoring Systems and Methods

[0130] FIG. 8 and FIG. 13 through FIG. 16 show embodiments of the flexible lead 10, in which folding spring-like fins or anchors deploy to anchor the lead in place in the atrial septum 41. Referring specifically to FIG. 13, a first lead component 53 is advanced through a sheath 67, the sheath 67 having been advanced across the atrial septum 41. In this embodiment, the first lead component 53 includes folding distal anchors 68 and proximal anchors 70 that lie folded and are held in place inside the interior lumen of the sheath 67. When the first lead component 53 and sheath 67 are properly positioned, which will generally involve the use of fluoroscopy or an alternative technique for imaging, the operator may carefully withdraw the sheath 67 from around the first lead component 53. As the distal and proximal anchors exit the sheath 67, they deploy themselves (as depicted in FIG. 8) on either side of the atrial septum 41, thereby anchoring the first lead component 53 securely in place. Similar anchors are sometimes used with leads for pacemakers and other medical devices where permanent anchoring is desired, and the operation of these anchors thus will not be entirely unfamiliar to the knowledgeable reader.

[0131] Referring now to FIG. 14, a second lead component 60 is advanced through a central lumen of the first lead component 53 after the guidewire 25 (see FIG. 15 and FIG. 16) and sheath 67 are removed. As in the previous embodiment, a left atrial pressure transducer 62 is carried at the distal end of the second lead component 60. Again, the first and second lead components 53, 60 are sized and configured with respect to one another so that the left atrial pressure transducer 62 protrudes from the first lead component 53 an appropriate amount into the left atrium 36. In addition, as in the previous embodiment, a second pressure transducer 65 on the exterior of the first lead component 53 allows for the measurement and transmittal of pressure within the right atrium 37.

[0132] Other anchoring methods may be devised by those skilled in the relevant arts. Moreover, approaches have been described by which the lead is positioned between the left atrium and an exit site from the patient's superior venous circulation. Alternate lead routes and exit sites may find use as well.

vi. Surgical Methods of Device Implantation

[0133] As described above, percutaneous transvenous implantation methods are used in accordance with several embodiments of the current invention. One skilled in the art will understand that alternative lead routes and exit sites from the venous system may also be used. One important class of alternative implantation methods consists of surgical implantation through the wall of the heart, either directly into the left atrium through the left atrial free wall or left atrial appendage, into the left atrium via a pulmonary vein, into the left atrium through the intra-atrial septum via the right atrial free wall, or directly into a pulmonary vein.

[0134] In one embodiment, the pressure transducer is implanted in the atrial free wall or in the wall of the atrial appendage. As described above, in one embodiment, at these locations the pressure sensing surface of the transducer is exposed to left atrial pressure, and the body of the transducer extends through the wall of the atrium or atrial appendage. A flexible lead from the implanted transducer provides signal connection to a telemetry antenna coil that the surgeon implants near the surface of the skin. In another embodiment, this coil may be connected directly to the implanted pressure transducer on the outside surface of the heart, without need for a flexible lead. In yet another embodiment, the flexible lead provides signal connection to a CRM generator housing located near the surface of the skin.

c. Pulmonary Vascular Implant

[0135] Vascular stents are implants that are deployed in blood vessels to support the size of the vascular channel and maintain adequate blood flow. A stent may also be used to anchor another type of device in a fixed location within the cardiovascular system. U.S. Patent No. 5,967,986, incorporated by reference herein, describes a stent coupled to one or more pressure transducers for the purpose of measuring blood flow in a vessel. In one embodiment of the current invention, a stent is used to support and anchor the sensor measuring a signal indicative of left atrial pressure. As mentioned above, the pressure in the pulmonary veins is substantially identical to that in the left atrium. Thus, in one embodiment of this invention, the pressure sensor is anchored in a pulmonary vein by means of a stent expanded within the vein.

[0136] In one embodiment of the current invention, a method and apparatus for continuous ambulatory detection, diagnosis and treatment of acute congestive heart failure is

provided. It will be understood that the current invention may be implemented using digital signal processing methods in which various input signals are sampled and the described procedures are performed on a set of samples. Hence, a periodic determination of the physiological parameter of interest is within the definition of the term continuous. In one embodiment, a percutaneously implantable system comprises a hermetically sealed pressure transducer/communications module mounted on an unexpanded vascular stent-like member. In one embodiment, the stent-like member is a cylindrical vascular stent such as a balloon expandable or self-expanding metallic stent similar to those used to treat vascular stenosis such as atherosclerotic stenosis of a coronary or peripheral artery. The pressure transducer/communications module is mechanically coupled to the unexpanded stent and the stent/transducer module is mounted on a delivery catheter constituting a stent/transducer delivery system. The stent/transducer delivery system is percutaneously inserted into a patient's body via the venous or arterial system.

[0137] In one embodiment, the delivery system courses over a guide wire that has been positioned from proximal to distal, starting outside the patient, percutaneously entering into the venous system and into the right atrium, through the right ventricle and into a branch of the pulmonary artery. The stent/transducer module is then advanced over the guide wire into the selected branch of the pulmonary artery that is approximately the diameter of the expanded stent/transducer module.

[0138] In another embodiment, a standard transseptal catheterization procedure is performed to place a guide wire that courses from proximal to distal starting outside the patient percutaneously into the venous system into the right atrium, across the intra-atrial septum, into the left atrium and finally into one of the four pulmonary veins. The stent/transducer delivery system is then advanced over the guide wire until the unexpanded stent/transducer is positioned in the pulmonary vein that is approximately the diameter of the expanded stent/transducer module. The stent is then expanded such that the cylinder described by the stent is coaxially in contact with the vessel wall confining the transducer/communications module so that its outer surface contacts the vessel wall.

2. Pressure Transducer

a. Pressure Sensor Locations

[0139] In one embodiment of the invention, the apparatus and/or method for treating cardiovascular disease includes one or more sensors, such as pressure sensors. In one embodiment, the pressure sensor is located in the atrial septum, the left atrial appendage, one of the pulmonary veins, or any other location in pressure communication with the left atrium, for example, but not limited to, the right atrium, the central veins, or any location as known to those of skill in the art suitable for measuring a pressure related to the pressure in the pulmonary veins, the pulmonary capillary wedge pressure, the pulmonary artery diastolic pressure, the left ventricular end diastolic pressure, or the right ventricular end diastolic pressure. In one embodiment, the pressure signal includes a pulmonary vein pressure, a pulmonary capillary wedge pressure, a pulmonary artery diastolic pressure, a left ventricular end diastolic pressure, a right ventricular end diastolic pressure, right atrial pressure, or the pressure measured in the intrathoracic space, or the central veins. In another embodiment, the signal includes algorithms that estimate pulmonary artery diastolic pressure from the right ventricular waveform, the right ventricular end diastolic pressure, or the right atrial pressure.

b. Pressure Sensor Design

[0140] In one embodiment, the physiological sensor includes a pressure transducer. In one embodiment, the pressure transducer is contained within a hermetically sealed sensor package, or module. The sensor package may be provided in a wide range of sizes and shapes. In one embodiment, the sensor package is cylindrical, and is between about 1 mm and 5 mm long, and 3 mm in diameter. In another embodiment, the sensor package is between about 5 mm and about 15 mm long. In another embodiment the package is about 8 mm long, and about 3 mm in diameter. In one embodiment the package is less than about 1 mm in diameter. In another embodiment, the package is less than about 10 mm long. Microsensors may also be used. In one embodiment, the package may be rectangular, square, spherical, oval, elliptical, or any other shape suitable for implantation. In one embodiment, the sensor package is rigid, and in another embodiment, the sensor package is flexible.

[0141] In one embodiment, the sensor package includes a titanium cylindrical housing that is closed at one end by titanium foil membrane. In one embodiment, the foil

membrane is between about 0.001 to 0.003 inches, between about 0.003 inches and about 0.005 inches, or less than 0.001 inches thick. In another embodiment, the foil membrane is between about 25 microns to about 50 microns thick, and about 0.08 to 0.10 inches (about 2.0 to 2.5 mm) in diameter. Foil diaphragms of this type have relatively low compliance, meaning that they exhibit relatively little strain, or displacement, in response to changes in pressure. For example, in one embodiment, a 2.5 mm diameter by 50-micron thick titanium foil diaphragm has a displacement at its center of only about 4.3 microns per mm Hg pressure change. Higher compliance is a disadvantage for implantable pressure sensors because tissue overgrowth can limit the relatively larger motion of a high compliance diaphragm, causing errors in the sensed pressure reading.

[0142] In one embodiment, resistive strain gauges are bonded to the inside surface of the foil.

[0143] In one embodiment, the titanium cylindrical housing comprises an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC or "chip") or "measurement electronics." Measurement electronics are contained within the housing, connected to the strain gauges by fine gold wires. The other end of the housing is sealed by a ceramic feed-through that is brazed to a titanium cylinder.

[0144] In one embodiment, the pressure of the gas sealed in the cylinder is slightly lower than the lowest external pressure anticipated, so that the net force on the foil will be inward under normal conditions of operation, forming a concave membrane shape. The advantage of maintaining a concave membrane shape throughout the pressure range of operation is that it avoids potential pressure measurement artifacts that are known to sometimes occur when a pressure sensing membrane transitions between a concave and a convex shape, a phenomenon known as "oil-canning." In one embodiment, oil-canning is avoided by using a transducer diaphragm that has low compliance, with low compliance as described above, and that is nearly flat in the absence of a pressure differential. In one embodiment, the diaphragm is about 2.0 to 2.5 mm in diameter and is within about 25 microns of flat in the absence of a pressure differential. In another embodiment, the diaphragm thickness is maximized to maximize flatness and minimize compliance, consistent with the sufficient compliance to derive a useable transducer signal.

[0145] In one embodiment, the pressure sensor includes temperature compensation so that pressure measurements will not be affected by temperature change. This also provides the temperature at the site of the sensor. In one embodiment, temperature compensation or modulation is achieved by using multiple resistive strain gauges arranged in a Wheatstone bridge, such that the electrical voltage output of the bridge is proportional to the ratio of two or more resistances, as is well known in the art of electrical measurements. By selecting resistive strain gauges with substantially identical temperature coefficients, the intrinsic output of the bridge is made to be temperature independent. However, the overall response of the pressure transducer may still be temperature dependent due to other factors, such as the different thermal expansions of the various components and contents of the device. Another embodiment of temperature compensation utilizes an internal thermometer consisting of, for example, a resistor whose resistance depends upon temperature in a reproducible way, and which is placed in a location isolated from the transducer diaphragm so that its resistance does not depend on pressure variations. Prior to implanting the device, calibration data is collected consisting of the output of the transducer versus pressure as a function of the reading of the internal thermometer. After implantation, the signal from the internal thermometer is used together with the transducer output and the calibration data to determine the temperature compensated pressure reading. In one embodiment, a band gap voltage reference is used to create a current proportional to absolute temperature that is then compared to the temperature-independent voltage reference. Such methods are well-known in the art of CMOS integrated circuit design.

[0146] In one embodiment, the devices described herein are configured similarly to a cardiac pacemaker, with a hermetically sealed housing implanted under the patient's skin and a flexible lead with a pressure transducer at its distal end. The housing contains a battery, microprocessor and other electronic components, including a patient signaling device and transcutaneous telemetry means for transmitting programming information into the device and for transmitting physiological data out to an external programmer/interrogator.

[0147] One skilled in the art will understand that alternative distributions of the components may be constructed in accordance with several embodiments of the present invention. In one alternative, the pressure sensing circuitry is incorporated into the pressure

transducer unit implanted in the heart, reducing the number of conductors needed in the lead to as low as two.

[0148] In another embodiment, the signal processing, prescription algorithms, and patient signaling components are located in a device external to the patient's body in communication with the implanted subcutaneous housing via one of various forms of telemetry well known in the art, such as two-way radio frequency telemetry.

[0149] In another embodiment, the pressure sensor is fabricated by micro electro-mechanical systems (MEMS) techniques, as taught by, for example U.S. Patent No. 6,331,163, herein incorporated by reference.

c. Sensor-tissue interaction issues

[0150] In one embodiment, within several weeks after implantation, the entire device is covered with new tissue, including fibrous tissue and endothelium. A covering of endothelium is desirable because it prevents the formation of blood clots that, if formed, could break loose and cause a blocked artery elsewhere in the body, most dangerously in the brain. A covering of fibrous tissue is also a common component of the body's healing response to injury and/or foreign bodies. An excessive growth of fibrous tissue on the left atrial surface of the pressure sensor may be undesirable because it may interfere with accurate transmission of fluid pressure in the left atrium to the pressure sensitive diaphragm. In addition, contraction of fibrous tissue over time may cause progressive changes in the pressure waveform or mean value, which could confound interpretation of the data.

i. Low compliance sensor membrane

[0151] In one embodiment, the pressure transducer membrane is designed to have very low compliance. In one embodiment, a low compliance pressure transducer is fabricated using titanium foil as described above. In another embodiment, a low compliance pressure transducer is fabricated from, for example, silicon, using micro electromechanical systems (MEMS) techniques. In yet another embodiment, a coating is provided on the left atrial surface of the pressure sensor.

ii. Coatings, polishing, and drug eluting surfaces

[0152] In one embodiment, a coating inhibits or minimizes the formation of undesirable fibrous tissue, while not preventing the beneficial growth of an endothelial

covering. Coatings with these properties are well known in the art of implanting medical devices, particularly intravascular stents, into the blood stream. Surface coating materials include, but are not limited to, paralene, PVP, phosphoryl choline, hydrogels, albumen affinity, and PEO.

[0153] In one embodiment, at least some areas of the sensor package and diaphragm are electropolished. Electropolished surfaces are known by those skilled in the art to reduce the formation of thrombosis prior to endothelialization, which leads to a reduced burden of fibrotic tissue upon healing. All metallic intracoronary stents currently approved for clinical use are electropolished for this purpose.

[0154]. Release of antiproliferative substances including radiation and certain drugs are also known to be effective in stenting. Such drugs include, but are not limited to, Sirolimus and related compounds, Taxol and other paclitaxel derivatives, steroids, other anti-inflammatory agents such as CDA, antisense RNA, ribozymes, and other cell cycle inhibitors, endothelial promoting agents including estradiol, antiplatelet agents such as platelet glycoprotein IIb/IIIa inhibitors (ReoPro), anti-thrombin compounds such as heparin, hirudin, hirulog etc, thrombolytics such as tissue plasminogen activator (tPA). These drugs may be released from polymeric surface coating or from chemical linkages to the external metal surface of the device. Alternatively, a plurality of small indentations or holes can be made in the surfaces of the device or its retention anchors that serve as depots for controlled release of the above mentioned antiproliferative substances, as described by Shanley et al. in U.S. Publication No. 2003/0068355, published April 10, 2003, incorporated by reference herein.

d. Pressure Signal Detection

[0155] In one embodiment, the implanted portion of the device is comprised of a plurality of up to n physiologic signal detection sensors S described by the set:

$\{S_1, S_2, \dots S_n\}$.

[0156] In one embodiment, S_1 , the first sensor, detects a parameter that is indicative of left atrial pressure or S_{iLAP} , thus

$\{S_{iLAP}, S_2, \dots S_n\}$.

[0157] Signals indicative of left atrial pressure can be pressure signals measured at a variety of sites and may be detected by a variety of pressure transducer types. The signals may be obtained from locations in the cardiovascular system or adjacent to the cardiovascular system known to be similar to or highly correlated with direct pressure readings from the left atrium. Such locations for obtaining pressure signals similar to the left atrium are well known to those skilled in the art, such as Cardiologists. Locations for sensing pressure include, but are not limited to, the left atrium and its contiguous structures, the pulmonary veins, the pulmonary capillary wedge or occlusion pressure, the pulmonary artery diastolic pressure, and the left ventricular end diastolic pressures. Other pressures indicative of left atrial pressure include differential pressures such as the difference between the left atria and the right atria, or the difference between the pulmonary capillary wedge and right atrial pressures, as shown by the correlation in FIG. 17. The individual signals comprising the differential signal correlate independently with left atrial pressure.

3. Non-Pressure Sensors

a. Left Atrial Dimension

[0158] In one embodiment, the system may include one or more additional sensors. In one embodiment, a non-pressure sensor is also provided to generate a signal indicative of pressure in the left atrium. Hemmingsson (U.S. Patent No. 6,421,565), incorporated by reference herein, describes such an implantable cardiac monitoring devices as an A-mode ultrasound probe which is adapted to be positioned in the right ventricle of a heart, and which emits an ultrasound signal which is reflected from one cardiac segment of the left ventricle of the heart, and the ultrasound probe receives the resulting echo signal. The delay between the emission of the ultrasound signal and the reception of the resulting echo is measured, and from this delay a position of the cardiac segment is determined. In one embodiment, an A-mode ultrasound probe is deployed in the right atrium of a heart so that an ultrasound signal is reflected from one or more cardiac segments of the left atrium, either the atrial septal segment, the lateral wall segment, or both. Increased left atrial pressure is known to cause an increase in the volume of the left atrium by displacing the walls of the left atrium away from each other. Thus, measurement of the positions of one or more left atrial walls

provides a signal indicative of left atrial pressure, as described below, that can be used to guide therapy for CHF.

[0159] Kojima (U.S. Patent No. 4,109,644), incorporated by reference herein, describes another implantable ultrasound transducer that could be used in the manner described above to determine left atrial dimension and thus derive a signal indicative of left atrial pressure:

[0160] In one embodiment, the sensor comprises one pressure sensor, a pressure sensor package, or module, with pressure sensor and electronics, or a sensor package containing electronics, a pressure sensor, and at least one non-pressure sensor. In one embodiment, the at least one non-pressure sensor provides a signal indicative of: an internal electrocardiogram; a temperature; a physical dimension; an electrical resistance, such as, but not limited to, a thoracic electrical impedance; a respiratory tidal volume; a respiratory rate; lung acoustics; oxygen saturation; oxygen partial pressure, including oxygen partial pressure in the left chamber or the right chamber; or cardiac output. In another embodiment of the invention, the non-pressure sensor measures: left atrial dimension, cross-sectional area, or volume; left ventricular dimension, cross-sectional area or volume; atrial septum position; velocity, or acceleration. In one embodiment, a non-implanted sensor is provided. In one embodiment, the non-implanted sensor includes: an arterial pressure cuff, including an automated arterial pressure cuff; and a weight scale. In one embodiment, two sensors are provided, a first sensor and a second sensor. In one embodiment, the first sensor measure a pressure in the heart and the second sensor measures a non-pressure parameter, including, but not limited to the parameters listed above. In one embodiment, the second sensor is also a pressure sensor. In one embodiment, the first sensor is located internal to the patient and the second sensor is located external to the patient. Located "external", as used herein, shall be given its ordinary meaning and shall also mean located on the patient, in contact with the patient, or located completely independent of the patient.

b. Core Temperature

[0161] Other non-pressure physiologic parameters may be used in other embodiments. Casscells III, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,454,707), incorporated by reference herein, describe a method and apparatus for predicting mortality in congestive heart failure

patients by monitoring body temperature and determining whether a downward trend in temperature fits any predetermined criteria. The apparatus described by Casscells et al. determines when death is imminent and generates an alarm. In one embodiment of the present invention, the trend in body temperature is used daily to adjust the patient's therapy at an earlier point before any downward trend in temperature becomes critical. In one embodiment, core body temperature is measured at the atrial septum. In another embodiment, core body temperature is measured at the site of a measurement module located anywhere within the heart, heart chambers, great vessels, or other locations within the thorax known in the medical arts to maintain a temperature related in a predictable way to core body temperature.

4. Signals

a. Left atrial pressure signals

[0162] In one embodiment, one of the physiological sensors is a pressure transducer that is used to generate a signal indicative of pressure in the left atrial chamber of the patient's heart (the "left atrial pressure," or LAP). In one embodiment, a LAP versus time signal is processed to obtain one or more medically useful parameters. These parameters include, but are not limited to, mean LAP, temporally filtered LAP (including low-pass, high-pass, or band-pass filtering), heart rate, respiratory variations of LAP, respiration rate, and parameters related to specific features of the LAP waveform such as the so-called a, v, and c waves, and the x, x', and y descents. All these parameters are well known to those skilled in the art. Examples of such features in normal cardiac pressure tracings are illustrated in **FIG. 18**. Examples of parameters derived from specific LAP waveform features include the mechanical A-V delay interval, as defined below (as distinct from the electrical A-V interval derived from the electrocardiogram); the relative peak pressures of the a and v waves, normal values of which are given in the table in **FIG. 19**; and the pressure values at specific times in the LAP waveform, as are understood by those skilled in the art.

[0163] In one embodiment, signals indicative of left atrial pressure are periodic signals that repeat with a period the length of which is equal to the period in between heartbeats. Any portion of the signal or a summary statistic of that periodic signal may be

indicative of left atrial pressure and provide diagnostic information about the state of the heart. For example, the a, c, v waves and the x, x', and y descents, described above, correlate with mechanical events such as heart valves closing and opening. Any one of these elements can yield useful information about the heart's condition. Each discrete element represents an individual signal indicative of left atrial pressure. A summary statistic such as the arithmetic mean left atrial pressure also represents a signal indicative of left atrial pressure. One skilled in the art will appreciate that there are additional discrete elements and summary statistics that are valuable indicators of left atrial pressure. Advantageously these components of left atrial pressure are relative to each other and therefore do not have to be compensated for atmospheric pressure and are not subject to offset drift inherent in most pressure transducers.

[0164] In one embodiment, the relative heights and/or shapes of the left atrial “a,” “c,” and “v” waves are monitored to detect and diagnose changes in severity of cardiovascular disease. This information permits differentiation between worsening symptoms of CHF due to volume overload versus impaired left ventricular pump function (such as decrease left ventricular compliance, or acute mitral regurgitation), allowing medical therapy to be appropriately targeted. For example, pure volume overload is usually manifest with a progressive elevation of the mean left atrial pressure and generally responds to fluid removal by taking a diuretic medication, natriuretic peptide, or and invasive technique known as ultrafiltration of the blood. Decreased left ventricular compliance is the diagnosis when the “a” wave increases without shortening of the atrioventricular (AV) delay or in the presence of mitral stenosis. Acutely decreased compliance may be indicative of left ventricular (LV) ischemia, while chronically decreased compliance may be indicative of LV wall thickening know as hypertrophy. The former may respond to nitrates or coronary artery interventions, while the latter may respond to beta or calcium antagonist drugs, or chemical septal ablation. Increases in the “v” wave amplitude and merging with the “c” wave to produce a “cv” wave is usually indicative of acute mitral valve regurgitation. This may be due to a sudden mechanical failure of the valve or its supporting apparatus, or it may be due to acute ischemia of the supporting papillary muscles as part of an acute coronary artery syndrome. Sudden mechanical failure requires surgical repair or replacement, while ischemia may require anti-ischemic medications such as nitroglycerin or coronary artery interventions

such as angioplasty or bypass surgery. FIGS. 6A-6C list these and other parameters derivable from cardiac pressure tracings that may be interpreted to facilitate diagnosis of cardiovascular disease states.

[0165] In another embodiment, atrial fibrillation and atrial flutter are detected by analysis of the LAP waveform. In another embodiment, spectral analysis of the LAP versus time signal is performed.

i. Measurement of Absolute Pressure

[0166] In one embodiment, an apparatus for measuring absolute pressure at a location within the body is provided. In one embodiment, the apparatus includes a transducer/communications module for making measurements, and communicating the measurement to another device, as described above. The transducer/communications module can include transducers or sensors suitable for measuring pressure, as are well known to those of skill in the art, temperature, or other physiological parameters. In one embodiment, the transducer/communications module measures an absolute pressure. In another embodiment, the transducer/communications module measures the pressure difference between a location in the body and a reference pressure within the implanted transducer/communications module.

ii. Measurement of Relative Pressure (Gauge Pressure)

[0167] In one embodiment, the system contains the necessary components to obtain a signal indicative of pressure relative to atmospheric pressure. An implanted apparatus for measuring absolute pressure at a location within the body is provided as above, which further communicates this information, as either an analog or digital signal, to an external signal analyzer/communications device. The external signal analyzer/communications device further contains a second pressure transducer configured to measure the atmospheric (barometric) pressure. The analyzer/communications device performs a calculation using the absolute pressure from the implanted module and the atmospheric pressure to obtain the internal pressure relative to atmospheric pressure, that is,

difference between the absolute pressure at the location within the body and the absolute barometric pressure outside the body. This pressure, also known as the gauge pressure, is known to those skilled in the art to be the most physiologically relevant pressure measure. The implanted module may contain an internal power source such as a battery, or it can be powered transcutaneously by induction of radio frequency current in an implanted wire coil connected to the module to charge an internal power storage device such as a capacitor.

[0168] In one embodiment, gauge pressure measurements are performed only when the implanted apparatus is queried by the external analyzer/communications device, advantageously assuring that the atmospheric pressure at the time and patient's location is available and correctly matched with the absolute internal pressure reading. It will be clear to those skilled in the art that unmatched internal and barometric pressure readings would render the gauge pressure measurement inaccurate or useless. In this embodiment, internal absolute measurements are made only when the external analyzer/communications device is physically present. In one embodiment, this is accomplished by having the external device supply operating power to the implant module to make the measurement. In another embodiment, this is accomplished by requiring a proximity RF link to be present between the external and implantable modules, either immediately before and/or after and/or during the measurement.

[0169] Other arrangements of pressure transducers will be apparent to one skilled in the art. The transducer/communications module may contain other types of sensing apparatus. In one embodiment, in addition to the implanted pressure sensor, electrocardiographic and temperature sensors are provided.

iii. Measurement of Differential Pressure

[0170] In another embodiment, an apparatus for measuring differential pressure is provided. In one embodiment, the apparatus includes a transducer/communications module for making measurements, and communicating the measurement to another device, such as a processor, or patient advisory module. The transducer/communications module can include transducers or sensors (these terms are used synonymously herein), suitable for measuring pressure as are well known to those of skill in the art, temperature, or other physiological parameters. In one embodiment, the transducer/communications module measures a

differential pressure that includes the pressure difference between two locations inside of the body. For example, the transducer/communications module measures the difference between the fluid pressure of the blood in an artery, and the intrathoracic pressure, detected through the artery's wall. In another example, the transducer/communications module measures the difference between the fluid pressure in the left atrium and the left atrium of the heart, detected by a module

[0171] In one embodiment, the transducer/communications module includes a plurality of pressure sensing membranes, each with an outer surface and an inner surface. In one embodiment, there are two pressure sensing membranes in the module so that when the device is implanted, for example in the atrial septum, one pressure sensing membrane's outer surface is in contact with the blood of the left atrium and the other pressure sensing membrane's surface is in contact with the blood of the right atrium. The inner surfaces of both pressure-sensing membranes are exposed to the same internal space within the device. Each membrane has an associated strain gauge, each strain gauge creating a signal indicative of the pressure difference between the outer and the inner surfaces of the respective membrane. Since the two membranes share the internal space, the pressures on their inner surfaces are equal. Thus, the differential pressure, determined by subtracting the pressure of one transducer from the other, is proportional to the left atrial pressure in reference to the right atrial pressure. The baseline-offset calibration of the differential transducer can be determined by having the patient perform a Valsalva maneuver, which is known by those skilled in physiology to equalize the pressure within the chambers of the heart.

[0172] In one embodiment, the module contains the necessary components to obtain from the transducers a signal indicative of differential pressure, and to communicate this information either as an analog or digital signal, indicative of the severity of a condition, such as congestive heart failure, to an external signal analyzer/communications device. The implanted module may contain an internal power source such as a battery, or it can be powered transcutaneously by induction of radio frequency current in an implanted wire coil connected to the module to charge an internal power storage device such as a capacitor.

b. Other Measures Indicative of Left Atrial Pressure

[0173] In one embodiment, pulmonary artery diastolic pressure (PADP) is estimated from an analysis of the right ventricular pressure waveform, as taught by Carney in U.S. Pat. No. 5,368,040, incorporated by reference in its entirety herein. In one embodiment, the pressure module is placed in the right ventricle. In other embodiments, the pressure module is placed in the right atrium or a pulmonary artery. It is known to those skilled in the art that under certain circumstances, PADP approximates the pulmonary capillary wedge pressure (PCWP), which is a clinically useful measure of mean left atrial pressure. In this case, the right ventricular pressure waveform provides a signal indicative of left atrial pressure.

[0174] In several embodiments, non-pressure physiologic signals are used to indicate left atrial pressure. In most cases, these non-pressure physiologic signals correlate to left atrial pressure through straightforward mathematical relationships. For example, for periodic signals of left atrial pressure and volume, a periodic pressure-volume relationship may be used. One well-known example of a pressure-volume relationship occurs during atrial diastole, when the ratio $\Delta V/\Delta P$, known as the diastolic compliance, is generally stable. Thus, a given left atrial volume, cross-sectional area or any dimension indicative of that volume is also a signal indicative of left atrial pressure, and a sensor capable of measuring a left atrial dimension or area may be used to determine left atrial pressure. Thus, in one embodiment of the invention, one or more physiological sensors are provided to directly or indirectly sense one or more of the following physiological parameters: left atrial dimension, cross-sectional area, and/or volume; left ventricular dimension, cross-sectional area or volume; atrial septum position; heart chamber wall velocity, and/or acceleration.

[0175] Examples of sensors capable of measuring such dimensions or areas include, but are not limited to an intracardiac ultrasonic imaging system operating in M-mode, 2-dimensional, or 3-dimensional modes, as well as paired ultrasonic crystals. It is well known in the art that heart chamber dimensions or cross-sectional areas may be measured and volumes estimated by the use of ultrasound, as described, for example, by Kojima (U.S. Patent No. 4,109,644) and by Hemmingsson (U.S. Patent No. 6,421,565), both incorporated by reference herein. Such ultrasonic systems may have additional diagnostic value in that

Doppler analysis can detect changes in atrial flow patterns due, for example, to mitral regurgitation.

[0176] It is also known in the art that electrical impedance changes may be indicative of changes in heart chamber dimensions. An example of a physiological sensor suitable for use in one embodiment of the current invention is described by Alt (U.S. Patent No. 5,003,976), incorporated by reference herein. Alt describes how analyzing the impedance between two intracardiac electrodes may be used to determine changes in cardiac chamber volumes, which under certain circumstances as described above are indicative of changes in chamber pressures, and thus may be used to detect worsening heart failure and guide therapy according to the present invention.

[0177] In accordance with the above description, an embodiment of the present invention comprises a physiologic signal detection sensors set which may be alternately described as:

$\{S_{iLAV}, S_2, \dots S_n\}$, where S_{iLAV} is a sensor indicative of left atrial volume;

$\{S_{iLAA}, S_2, \dots S_n\}$, where S_{iLAA} is a sensor indicative of left atrial cross-sectional area; or

$\{S_{iLAD}, S_2, \dots S_n\}$, where S_{iLAD} is a sensor indicative of left atrial dimension;

where the first sensor in all sets detects a signal that is indicative of left atrial pressure. Additional sensors in the implanted portion of the device may include detectors for any other physiologic signal. For example:

$\{S_{iLAP}, S_{iLAD}, \hat{S}_{iECG}, S_{iCT}, S_{iO_2}, \dots S_n\}$,

where sensors denoted by subscripts iECG, iCT, iO₂ are detectors or signals indicative of the electrogram, core temperature, and oxygen saturation, respectively. One skilled in the art will appreciate that there are numerous sensor configurations and sensor types that may be used in accordance with various embodiment of the present invention.

[0178] In one embodiment of the invention, multiple physiologic sensors are contained in a single package. In another embodiment, a plurality of packages is spatially distributed. Some of the packaging may place a particular sensor outside of the body. For example, in one embodiment, signal detection sensor packages P₁, P₂, and P₃ may be located internally or external to the body and consist of the following sets:

$P_1 = \{S_{iLAP}, S_{iCT}\}$, located in the intra-atrial septum;

$P_2 = \{S_{iECG}\}$, located in the superior vena cava; and

$P_3 = \{S_{iABP}\}$, where iABP is a signal indicative of arterial blood pressure.

[0179] One skilled in the art will appreciate that several embodiments of the current invention include the detection of various signals indicative of left atrial pressure. Such signals include, but are not limited to: a , c , v , x , x' , and y of LAP, mean LAP, the respiratory portion of LAP, the total cardiac portion of LAP, and filtered LAP between frequencies. In several embodiments, non-LAP signals are used. These non-LAP signals include, but are not limited to, the detection of a and b left atrial volume, left ventricular volume, atrial fibrillation, atrial flutter, respiratory tidal volume, respiratory rate, weight change, blood pressure or change in blood pressure, core temperature, oxygen saturation, oxygen partial pressure, cardiac output, LA to RA temperature differential, lung acoustic signal, and EEG.

[0180] One skilled in the art will understand that numerous configurations of sensors and sensor packaging and locations may be used in accordance with various embodiments of the current invention.

c. Other blood pressure signals

[0181] In another embodiment, one or more physiological sensors measure central venous blood pressure.

[0182] In one embodiment of the invention, one or more of the physiological sensors measure peripheral arterial blood pressure. Analysis of peripheral artery blood pressure to obtain a parameter indicative of congestive heart failure status has been described, by Finkelstein (U.S. Patent No. 4,899,758), incorporated by reference herein. In one such embodiment, the peripheral artery blood pressure sensor may be a cuff sphygmomanometer, and the patient's systolic and diastolic blood pressures are entered into the signal processing apparatus by the user. In a further embodiment, the blood pressures may be sent by direct signal communication to the signal processor.

d. Other physiological parameters

[0183] In one embodiment, the internal electrocardiogram (known as the IEGM) is sensed at one or more locations. In a further embodiment, the IEGM is processed to obtain

one or more medically useful parameters. These parameters include, but are not limited to, heart rate, the timing of atrial and ventricular depolarization, the time interval between atrial and ventricular depolarization (known in the art as the A-V interval), the duration of ventricular depolarization (known in the art as the Q-T interval), ST segment changes to detect acute ischemia, and spectral analysis to detect t-wave alternans (a known harbinger of life threatening arrhythmias), all of which are familiar to those skilled in the art.

[0184] In one embodiment, one of the physiological sensors is a thermometer measuring core body temperature, as described above.

[0185] In one embodiment of the present invention, Doppler ultrasound provides a signal that is proportional to the relative velocity of the ultrasound probe and a structure, such as a heart chamber wall, producing an ultrasound echo. A velocity signal can be differentiated to obtain an acceleration, as is well known to those skilled in the art. Conversely, implantable accelerometers are sensors known in the art that provide a signal that is proportional to the acceleration of the implanted sensor. An acceleration signal can be integrated to obtain a velocity plus an arbitrary constant velocity. Because it is known that the average velocity of any structure in the body, relative to the body, is necessarily zero, the arbitrary constant velocity is determined, and the relative velocity signal can be uniquely recovered from the acceleration signal. Thus, velocity and acceleration measurements of structures in the heart are essentially equivalent, the one being derivable from the other. As is well known in the art, a velocity signal may be integrated to obtain a position or displacement signal plus an arbitrary constant displacement. Thus, the motion and displacement of a structure in the heart, or the range of variation of the dimension of a chamber of the heart, may be recovered from the velocity or acceleration signal of the structure or of the chamber walls, respectively.

[0186] Vallana and Garberoclio (U.S. Patent No. 5,454,838, incorporated by reference herein) teach that components of the velocity or acceleration signal are indicative of aspects of cardiac activity, such as opening of the mitral valve, closure of the mitral valve, opening of the aortic valve, closure of the aortic valve, an amount of ventricular ejection, rapid ventricular filling, delayed ventricular filling during atrial systole, and cardiac flow rate. As these aspects of cardiac activity may be indicative of changes in the patient's

condition, and may be responsive to changes in the patient's prescription, they are within the scope of parameters contemplated to be used with embodiments of the present invention.

[0187] In another embodiment of the present invention, a physiological sensor measures respiratory tidal volume, respiratory rate, lung acoustic signal, and/or thoracic electrical impedance.

[0188] In one embodiment of the invention, one of the physiological sensors measures total body weight. In one embodiment, the sensor is a scale. In another embodiment, the patient's weight is entered into the signal processing apparatus by the user. In another embodiment, the weight sensor is a scale that communicates a signal indicative of the patient's weight to the signal processing apparatus without requiring a user to enter the value. Lloyd et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,080,106), incorporated by reference herein, describe a digital scale suitable for use in one embodiment of this invention.

[0189] In yet another embodiment of the invention, one or more sensors measure: oxygen saturation; oxygen partial pressure in the left, right, both left and right-sided cardiac chambers, or adjacent great blood vessels; or cardiac output.

5. Signal processing apparatus

[0190] In one embodiment, the signal processing apparatus of the present invention receives signals from the one or more sensors, and processes them together with stored parameters relevant to the patient's medical management. In one embodiment, the result of this processing is a signal indicative of the appropriate therapeutic treatment or course of action the patient or an immediate personal care giver can take to manage or correct, as much as possible, the patient's condition. In one embodiment, the signal processing apparatus is located outside the patient's body. In one embodiment, signals from one or more permanently implanted physiological sensors are received by the external signal processing apparatus by wireless telemetry. In one embodiment, certain signal processing is performed within the one or more individual sensor devices prior to the signal being sent to the signal processing apparatus. In one embodiment one signal received by the signal processing apparatus is the LAP versus time waveform sampled at over 20 Hz for a duration of several respiratory cycles (for example, but not limited to, 10 to 30 seconds). In one embodiment, the signal processing apparatus also receives a signal from a temperature sensor

located at substantially the same position as the LAP sensor and uses this temperature to apply a temperature compensation correction to the LAP signal using calibration data stored in the signal processing apparatus. In one embodiment, the processor also receives ambient temperature and atmospheric pressure, performs temperature compensation, and subtracts the atmospheric pressure from the LAP to obtain the relative or “gauge” LAP. In one embodiment, the signal processing apparatus then computes the mean LAP from the relative LAP versus time waveform. In one embodiment the signal processing apparatus then compares the mean LAP with patient-specific treatment ranges for mean LAP that have been programmed into the signal processing apparatus by the patient’s physician. In one embodiment, for each patient-specific programmed treatment range the patient’s physician stores in the signal processing apparatus an indication of the appropriate therapeutic treatment or action the patient should take to manage or correct, as much as possible, the patient’s condition. A signal indicative of the physician-prescribed therapeutic action corresponding to the patient-specific range into which the measured physiologic parameter falls is then sent to a patient signaling device.

[0191] In another embodiment of the invention, the signal processing apparatus is essentially permanently implanted within the body, in either the same or a different location as the one or more physiological sensors. In one embodiment, the sensors may be in signal communication with the signal processing apparatus by means of one or more connective leads that may carry electrical, optical, hydraulic, ultrasonic or other forms of signaling energy. The conductive lead(s) may vary in length up to and exceeding about 100 cm. In another embodiment, the sensors may be in wireless communication with the signal processing apparatus. The lead can be coupled to an antenna for wireless transmission or to additional implanted signal processing or storage apparatus.

6. Interpretation of Signals

[0192] In one embodiment of the present invention, patients are diagnosed based upon the interpretation of signals generated by one or more sensors. For example, a signal indicating low mean right atrial pressure may suggest hypovolemia or improper zeroing of the transducer. **FIGS. 6A-6C** provide other examples by which signals may be interpreted to

facilitate diagnosis, prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease according to various embodiments of the present invention.

[0193] One skilled in the art will understand that other interpretations may be used in accordance with various embodiments of the current invention. Further, one skilled in the art will understand that normal ranges of the various physiologic parameters measured in several embodiments of the current invention can be found in any cardiology textbook or reference book. Additionally, it may be useful to compare patient parameters within the same patient by ascertaining initial baseline values and comparing these baseline numbers to values generated at some later desired time. This may be particularly useful in determining progression of disease and response to treatment.

[0194] In several embodiments, sensors in addition to the left atrial pressure sensor are used. Additional sensors provide further refined diagnostic modes capable of distinguishing between different potential causes of worsening cardiovascular illness, and then of signaling an appropriate therapeutic treatment depending upon the particular cause for any particular occurrence.

[0195] For example, increased left atrial pressure is commonly caused by improper administration of medication, patient non-compliance, or dietary indiscretion, e.g., salt binging. These causes will be generally well-handled by changes in the patient's drug regimen like those described above. However, there are other causes of increased left atrial pressure that are less common, but by no means rare, and which require different therapies for adequate treatment. For example, one such potential cause is cardiac arrhythmia, and especially atrial fibrillation with a rapid ventricular response. Other arrhythmias may contribute as well to worsening heart failure. A system including an ECG electrode in addition to the left atrial pressure sensor would allow the system to diagnose arrhythmias and determine whether the arrhythmia preceded or came after the increase in left atrial pressure. Depending on the unit's programming, as specified by the patient's physician, specific therapies could be signaled tailored to treat the specific causes and conditions associated with particular adverse events.

[0196] In another example of the usefulness of additional physiological signals is to distinguish between pulmonary congestion caused by worsening CHF and that caused by a

respiratory infection. In a further embodiment, core body temperature is used together with left atrial pressure to allow the early detection of fever associated with infection. It is well known that core body temperature often becomes elevated hours to days prior to symptomatic fever associated with infection-related pulmonary congestion. In one embodiment, increased core temperature in the presence of stable left atrial pressure would trigger a message to the patient not to increase the dosage of oral diuretic despite symptoms of increasing congestion, and to consult with the physician.

7. Patient signaling devices

[0197] In one embodiment, the signal processing apparatus and the patient signaling device are permanently implanted, and the patient is signaled using at least two distinguishable stimuli, such as distinguishable sequences of vibrations, acoustic signals, or mild electrical shocks, perceptible by the patient.

[0198] According to one embodiment of the invention, one or more physiological sensors is implanted within the body, the signal processing apparatus and the patient signaling device are located outside the body, and the signal indicative of a physiological parameter is communicated by wireless telemetry through the patient's skin. In one embodiment, an external telemetry system is combined with the signal processing apparatus and the patient signaling device. In one embodiment, a hand-held personal data assistant (PDA) such as the Palm Pilot or Handspring Visor is used for the signal processing and patient signaling apparatus. In one embodiment, patient signaling is accomplished using sound, text, and/or images.

B. Combination with other devices

[0199] It will be clear to those skilled in the art that many patients who would benefit from several embodiments of the present invention would also benefit from an implantable CRM apparatus such as a cardiac pacemaker. In one embodiment, the present invention is combined with an implantable CRM apparatus generator. In one embodiment, the flexible lead on which the physiological sensor is disposed also serves as the sensing or pacing lead of an implantable rhythm management apparatus. In this case, conductors within the lead provide for EKG sensing, powering of the physiological sensor, data communication for the physiological sensor, and pacing stimulus.

[0200] In another embodiment, the present invention is functionally integrated with another implantable device, such as, for example, a pacemaker or a defibrillator. In one embodiment of this invention, one or more parameters indicative of a physiological condition produced by the present invention are used by the integrated device to control its therapeutic function, as described below.

[0201] In yet another embodiment, the sensor and lead of the Stand-Alone device may be connected without modification either to a subcutaneous coil antenna as described above, or to a combination CRM generator housing containing a battery power supply and other components as described below. In one embodiment the device may be upgraded after permanent implantation by replacing the coil antenna assembly with an implantable CRM apparatus.

1. **Combination with Cardiac Rhythm Management (CRM) Apparatus**

[0202] Many patients who might benefit from several embodiments of the present invention described above would also be likely to benefit from an implantable CRM apparatus for therapy of brady- or tachy-arrhythmia in the setting of CHF. Examples of such CRM devices include single or multichamber cardiac pacemakers; automatic implanted cardiac defibrillators; combined pacemaker/defibrillators; biventricular pacemakers; and three-chamber pacemakers, all well known to those skilled in the art. In these patients, it would be beneficial to combine several embodiments of the present invention with such a CRM device. This combination would have the advantage that certain components of both systems could be shared, reducing cost, simplifying implantation, minimizing the number of implanted devices or leads. As described in detail below, in some embodiments a combination with a CRM apparatus includes adding pacing and/or defibrillation to the therapeutic actions included in the dynamic prescription of several embodiments of the present invention.

[0203] In one embodiment, a flexible lead serves also as an atrial septal pacing lead. It will be recognized by those skilled in the art, such as cardiologists, that pacing the atrial septum provides certain advantages for patients with congestive heart failure. These advantages may include more direct control over left atrial/left ventricular synchrony, inhibition of atrial fibrillation, and it requires one less lead to be inserted in patients that are

in need of a rhythm management device that includes atrial pacing and a hemodynamic monitoring/therapy device, etc.

[0204] It will also be known to those skilled in the art that pacing multichamber sites in appropriate sequence in addition to the atria, such as the right ventricle and the lateral wall of the left ventricle in combination, or the lateral wall of the left ventricle alone, has specific advantages for some patients with congestive heart failure. **FIG. 20** illustrates one embodiment of the present invention in which a sensor package 15 at the end of flexible lead 10 is implanted across the atrial septum 41 of a patient's heart 33. The sensor package 15 measures the left atrial pressure and also serves as the atrial septal pacing electrode of a CRM device, which may be located within an implanted housing 7. A second flexible lead 160 is placed via the right atrium 30 into the right ventricle 37. Each lead is shown with an indifferent electrode 14 proximal to its respective distal electrode, although those skilled in the art will recognize one of these could be eliminated. The housing 7 contains the CRM device (not shown), which in one embodiment includes a battery and electrical circuitry for pacing the heart 33, and components of physiological monitoring system. It will be clear to the skilled artisan that a variety of configurations may be used to combine the CRM and physiological monitoring functions of such a combined device, examples of which are described below.

[0205] In one embodiment, the housing 7 includes a coil antenna 161 for communicating the one or more physiological signals from sensor package 15 to an external patient advisory module 6. In one embodiment, the external patient advisory module 6 includes a telemetry module 164 and antenna 162, a barometer 165 for measuring atmospheric pressure, and a signal processing/patient signaling device 166, such as described above with reference to **FIG. 5**.

[0206] In one embodiment, components are housed within the implantable housing of an implantable CRM apparatus, including but not limited to the power source, signal processing apparatus, telemetry apparatus, or patient alarm. Alternatively, in another embodiment, components of a CRM may be shared with other implantable devices, such as the apparatus for treating congestive heart failure described in greater above. Components that may be shared include, but are not limited to, a power source, telemetry module, data

memory, etc. For example, the flexible physiological sensing lead of any of the apparatus for treating congestive heart failure described above may be use as a pacing lead of a CRM. In other embodiments, separate pacemaker and sensing leads are provided.

[0207] In one embodiment of the present invention, components of the apparatus for treating congestive heart failure are shared with the components of a CRM apparatus in such a way that, while sharing components, the two systems function essentially independently. In one embodiment, the implantable CRM apparatus generator has a housing that also serves as the housing for at least some components of the apparatus described in greater detail above. In a further embodiment, the power supply of the CRM apparatus, typically comprising a long lifetime battery and power management circuitry, also supplies power for one or more components of the apparatus for treating congestive heart failure. In yet another embodiment, the flexible lead or leads connecting the sensors of the apparatus of FIG. 1, FIG. 2, and FIG. 4, to a shared housing/generator are also coupled to sensing and/or pacing electrodes of the CRM apparatus.

[0208] In one embodiment, one or more separate leads coupled to the physiological sensor described above, such as a pressure transducer, is also coupled to the CRM apparatus. In this embodiment, the CRM apparatus shares its generator housing with components of the implantable heart monitor apparatus described above, but the CRM apparatus leads are separate from the physiological sensor leads. In another embodiment, the pressure sensing lead may be combined with a pacing lead, as described for example by Pohndorf (U.S. Patent No. 4,967,755) or Lubin (U.S. Patent No. 5,324,326), herein incorporated by reference.

a. **Integration of sensor and pacing lead**

[0209] In one embodiment of the present invention, a system and method is provided for combining a CRM apparatus, implantable heart monitor, and patient communication device. The system provides the following functionality via a single pacing/sensing lead which in one embodiment includes only two conductors: (1) provides power to the physiological measurement module(s); (2) provides signaling for atrial pacing and sensing; (3) provides for programming of the physiological sensor package(s); and (4) provides measurement data from the physiological sensor package(s) to the

monitor/defibrillator housing for immediate or delayed use by the patient, doctor or other caregiver via the patient signaling module. Additional pacing and/or sensing leads may be added.

[0210] In one embodiment, an external telemetry device (such as described above with reference to **FIG. 4** and **FIG. 5**) is used to communicate with and query a CRM/heart monitor system. The external device analyzes the data with respect to the doctor's prescription, and then indicates to the patient which and what dose of medications or other actions he or she should take. In one embodiment, the data is also provided to the logic within the CRM system for improving pacing or defibrillation therapy.

[0211] For example, in one embodiment, the pressure waveform from the left atrial chamber contains information pertinent to adjusting atrioventricular dual chamber or atrio-biventricular triple chamber pacing for optimizing the synchrony between left atrial and left ventricular mechanical contraction. **FIG. 21** shows why it is difficult for pacemakers to automatically control the optimal delay between the left atrium (LA) and left ventricle (LV). The electrical atrioventricular delay (AV delay), which a conventional CRM system can sense, may be substantially different than the mechanical AV delay, which the conventional CRM cannot sense, but which is the relevant interval for optimizing cardiac function. The relationship between the electrical AV delay and the mechanical AV delay is dependent on several, difficult to measure variables, including intra-atrial conduction time, sub-AV node/HIS bundle conduction delays, volume/pressure preloading of the atria and ventricles and ventricular contractility, among other things, as is known to cardiologists and electrophysiologists. The mechanical AV delay is clinically important because if the delay is too long, usually greater than about 250 msec, then atrial contraction does not have an effective pressure boosting/volume priming effect on the left ventricle, thus adversely affecting LV contractility, stroke volume, and cardiac output. If the mechanical AV delay is too short, usually less than about 120 msec, atrial contraction occurs against a closed or closing mitral valve, again adversely affecting atrial emptying, and pressure/volume boosting of the LV pump. Both a too long and a too short LA-LV mechanical delay can potentially worsen heart failure by further raising the LA pressure. These conditions are potentially extractable from an LA pressure tracing in the following ways. Too long an LA-LV

mechanical delay will manifest as an increase in the amplitude of the LA pressure “v” wave relative to the “a” wave and an exaggeration of the “x” descent. Too short an LA-LV mechanical delay will manifest as an increase in the LA pressure “a” wave relative to the “v” wave and a reduction in the “x” descent. As illustrated in **FIG. 21**, the actual mechanical LA-LV delay can be directly measured from the LA pressure waveform as the interval from the onset of LA contraction represented by the LA pressure “a” wave, to mitral valve closure represented by the “c” wave. In one embodiment, the measured mechanical AV delay is used to adjust the electrical AV delay by a feedback control system or an algorithm to achieve a preset ideal AV delay, or alternatively by minimizing LA mean pressure.

[0212] There are other features in the LA pressure waveform that can be used to modify pacing parameters such as backup atrial pacing rate and rate-responsive algorithms that will be apparent to one skilled in the art. For example, to increase cardiac output, and potentially lower the left atrial pressure, the resting heart rate may be raised from the typical backup atrial pacing rate in the range of 60 to 70 beats per minute when the patient is in compensated heart failure (mean LAP < 16-20 mm Hg), to a faster backup atrial rate when the patient is decompensated with an elevation of LAP. Similarly, the mean left atrial pressure can be used to modify rate response algorithms, normally based on activity, minute ventilation, or other physiologic parameters, so that the rate response is also specific to the state of congestive heart failure.

[0213] In another embodiment, the signal processor, dynamic prescription, and patient signaling device are completely contained within the implanted CRM apparatus housing. Several methods of patient signaling from an implanted device are well known in the art, including the use of mild electrical stimulation (e.g., U.S. Patent Nos. 4,140,131, 4,619,653 and 5,076,272), or audible sounds (e.g., U.S. Patent Nos. 4,345,603 and 4,488,555), including intelligible speech (e.g., U.S. Patent No. 6,247,474), all herein incorporated by reference.

[0214] In another embodiment, the measurement of pressure or other physiological parameters may be multiplexed with the pacing signal (as described in greater detail below) so that pressure sensing and telemetry would occur between pacing signals, for

example as taught by Barcel (U.S. Patent No. 5,275,171) or Weijand et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,843,135), both incorporated by reference herein.

[0215] In one embodiment, pressure sensor electronics are integrated within a miniature hermetically sealed sensor package implanted in the heart, minimizing the number of conductors required in the lead between the sensor and the CRM apparatus generator housing. In this embodiment, the pressure sensor lead may also be used for pacing, with the sensor package, or portion thereof, used to include one of the electrodes of the CRM apparatus. In addition, in one embodiment, some of the pacing electronics are integrated within the sensor package that is implanted within the heart. This has the advantage that the lead conductors are isolated from the pacing electrode, providing immunity from induced currents when, for example, the patient is placed in the rapidly changing strong magnetic fields of a magnetic resonance imaging machine.

[0216] In clinical use, conventional cardiac pacemakers use analog voltages on the lead between the pacemaker generator and the heart for pacing, sensing and physiological measurements. As such, the sensing signals in particular are subject to noise due to muscular activity, radio frequency (RF) interference, and potential cross-talk between physiological and electrical sensing signals. Lead conductors carrying analog signals act as antennas for RF noise and for induced voltages due to RF energy used in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners. RF noise on a sense conductor may cause erroneous pacing, even with sophisticated filtering algorithms that are commonly used in pacemaker sensing systems. Voltages induced by RF and changing magnetic fields are a primary reason why MRI scanning is contraindicated for patients with implantable cardiac pacemakers.

[0217] In one embodiment, a pacemaker is provided in which the electronics for producing the pacing pulse output and for sensing the ECG are integrated within a sensor package at the site of the pacing electrode, which is generally implanted within the heart. This allows the lead conductors to be substantially isolated from the pacing electrode, thereby providing increased immunity from induced currents when, for example, the patient is placed in the rapidly changing, strong magnetic fields of a magnetic resonance imaging machine. The lead may incorporate one or more sensors without requiring additional lead conductors.

[0218] In one embodiment, the electronics in the proximal housing, for example, a housing implanted near the shoulder, operate at lower voltage than voltages required for pacing, and as a result are fabricated using smaller feature size CMOS technology. This allows for a smaller package and lower power consumption. The distal pacemaker components, for example, those located in the heart, are fabricated using larger feature size CMOS technology to handle the higher pacing voltage.

[0219] In one embodiment, the system allows sensing signals to be processed within the heart, thereby eliminating the risk of picking up noise with lead conductors. Separate sensing and pacing electrodes may be provided, with no additional lead conductors. This allows the sensing and pacing electrodes to be individually optimized. Pacing electrodes are optimally small in area to minimize required voltage for pacing, while sensing electrodes are optimally of large area to minimize impedance.

[0220] Referring now to **FIG. 22** and **FIG. 23**, two embodiments of a sensor package 200 are shown in which separate electrodes for sensing 202 and pacing 204 are included. In the embodiment of **FIG. 22**, the sensing electrode 202 is located at the proximal portion or segment 208 of the sensor package 200, while the pacing electrode 204 is located at the package distal portion or segment 210. The sensing and pacing electrodes 202, 204 are electrically separated by an insulating segment or ring 206. In one embodiment the insulating ring 206 is a cylindrical ceramic segment to which metallic proximal and distal segments 208, 210 of the sensor package 200 are hermetically fastened. Hermetic fastening may be achieved by using methods that are well known to those skilled in the art, such as, for example, braising.

[0221] In one embodiment, the surface area of the pacing electrode 204 is reduced by coating selected areas of the metallic distal segment 210 with an insulating material. In one embodiment, the insulating material is a tenacious thin coating such as, for example, parylene. One or more selected small areas may be masked off prior to coating to provide for one or more electrically conducting pacing electrodes 204. In one embodiment, the pacing electrode 204 includes an annular region 212. In another embodiment, the pacing electrodes 204 include areas on the distal anchor members 214 such that the pacing current is applied preferentially to the left atrial wall of the septum. In one embodiment, the pacing electrodes

204 include metallic electrodes fastened to tips of one or more of the distal anchor members 214. In one embodiment, the metallic tip electrodes are made of tantalum, which has the desirable property that it can be made as a porous, high surface area material. It will be familiar to the skilled artisan that such materials reduce contact impedance with tissue. Tantalum has the additional property of high x-ray density, which allows the anchor tips to be visualized under fluoroscopy for verifying the positioning and deployment of the anchor 214.

[0222] Referring now to **FIG. 23**, in another embodiment, two insulating ceramic segments 216, 218 are provided, which divide the sensor package housing 200 into distal, middle, and proximal metallic segments 220, 222, and 224. In one embodiment, the distal and proximal metal segments 220, 224 are substantially uncoated and serve as a sensing electrode 202, while the middle metallic segment 222 includes the pacing electrode 204. In a further embodiment, portions of the middle segment 204 are coated with a material such as, for example, parylene, to produce one or more smaller area pacing electrodes.

[0223] In one embodiment, the pacing and sensing electrodes 202, 204 of **FIG. 22** and **FIG. 23** are electrically coupled to pacing electronics located within the sensor package 200. In another embodiment, the sensor package pacing electronics are configured to detect a specific electrical event within the heart, such as the p-wave of the internal electrogram, as is well known to those skilled in the art of electrophysiology, cardiology and cardiac pacing. In one embodiment, the sensor package pacing electronics are further configured to send a digital signal indicating a sensed event, such as detection of the p-wave, to the pacing electronics in the proximal housing, as described further below.

[0224] In one embodiment of the present invention, a defibrillator and an implantable heart monitor (such as describe above with reference to **FIG. 1** through **FIG. 5**) are combined to provide the following functionality via an essentially standard pacing/defibrillator lead with only two conductors: (1) provide power to a physiologically optimized dosimeter (POD) measurement module(s); (2) provide signaling for atrial and/or ventricular pacing and sensing, (3) provide for atrial and/or ventricular defibrillation through a third lead attached to a defibrillation electrode; (4) provide for programming of the physiological sensor package; and (5) provide measurement data from the physiological

sensor package(s) to the monitor/defibrillator housing for storage and recovery by, e.g., a doctor or the patient via the patient signaling module.

[0225] In one embodiment, digital signaling is used to provide for power, two-way data communication, and pacing over a two-wire lead. In one embodiment, digital signaling consists of dividing a “frame” of a defined duration into a number of distinct sub-frame intervals, each with a defined function, as shown in the pulse timing diagram in **FIG. 24**. In one interval, a power pulse may be provided to charge the power supply of the sensor/pacing module. In one embodiment, the power pulse is provided during the first interval of every frame, so that the power pulse defines the end of one frame and the beginning of the next frame. In one embodiment, power pulses are generated at a precisely timed frequency within the generator module and this timing is used within the sensor/pacing module(s) to adjust an internal RC or current source clock for better synchronization between the distal sensor/pacing module and the generator module at the proximal end of the lead. Between one power pulse interval and the next, other intervals may be defined as needed for the transmission of data and signals over the lead. In one embodiment, the amplitude or magnitude of the power pulse is the same as the amplitude or magnitude of the data pulses, such as shown in **FIG. 24**. However, in other embodiments, the amplitude or magnitude of the power pulse is greater than, or less than the amplitude or magnitude of the data pulses. In one embodiment, the amplitude of the power pulse does not vary between pulses, and in another embodiment, the amplitude of the power pulse varies between pulses, or within pulses.

[0226] In the embodiment described in **FIG. 24**, the next two intervals are provided for signaling from the CRM module to the sensor/pacing module(s). In one embodiment, these two intervals are called the “download interval.” The first interval is asserted by the CRM module to command that a pacing stimulation pulse be applied (e.g., A-pulse Trigger). The second interval is asserted by the CRM module to indicate that commands producing a change in the mode of operation of the sensor/pacing module are to follow (e.g., Programming Bit set). Following the download interval, an “upload interval” may be provided for communication of information from the sensor/pacing module back to the generator module. As shown in **FIG. 24**, this information may include a bit that, if

asserted, indicates an atrial and/or ventricular sensed event, and/or measurement data, and/or status information about the current mode of operation of the sensor/pacing module.

[0227] In one embodiment, the type of data following the A-sense upload interval may be either upload or download data depending, for example, on whether a programming or pacing command had been asserted. In the embodiment of **FIG. 24**, if neither of the two download bits has been asserted in the current or the previous frame, the time intervals following the A-sense interval are used by the sensor/pacing module to upload measured data, such as pressure, temperature and electrogram (IEGM) waveform data. In order to conserve power, the pressure, temperature and IEGM data could be measured and output at a low duty cycle. If the Programming Bit is asserted in the current frame, the sensor/pacing module is set to listen for programming command bits sent by the CRM module. If either the A-pulse trigger or the Programming Bit was set in the previous frame, the sensor/pacer module provides status information indicating whether the command was successful.

[0228] In one embodiment, the download and upload intervals are subdivided into data words, each containing a predefined number of bits, so that multiple pieces of information are communicated. For example, the download interval may consist of a pacing command pulse followed by one or more programming bits. The upload interval may consist of a sensing bit (set if P- or R-wave of internal electrocardiogram is sensed by the measurement module), followed by a predetermined number of bits of pressure data, followed by a second predetermined number of bits of temperature data. All signals, including pressure, IEGM, and temperature, may be “alternated” in some fashion rather than being included in any single frame, to allow for shorter frames and therefore more frequent power supply support and synchronization. It will be clear to one skilled in the art that data from additional sensors may be appended in the same way. In one embodiment, additional checksum bit(s) are added to guard against data transmission errors.

[0229] In one embodiment, the power and signaling pulses described above are carried between the CRM module and the measurement module(s) via a two-conductor lead. Each conductor is internally connected within both modules. The first conductor may also be attached to the “indifferent” electrode, which defines the baseline potential for sensing and pacing. In one embodiment, a low impedance common conductor such as DFT wire extends

between the indifferent electrode and the measurement module in order to prevent the signaling pulses from affecting the sensing of the electrogram. In another embodiment, the indifferent electrode is connected to the sensing/pacing module by a third conductor. The second conductor is electrically isolated from the body. Advantageously, this conductor is physically contained by the outer coaxial first conductor and the housings at each end. To ensure electrical isolation at the CRM package, a spring contact without a setscrew and seal are provided on the second inner conductor rather than on the outer conductor as is customary in CRM devices. The measurement module stores electrical energy from one or more power pulses and applies an appropriate pacing pulse to a pacing electrode when a pacing command is received from the CRM module during the download interval. Importantly, the distance between the pacing electrode and the indifferent is substantially reduced, thereby greatly reducing any induced voltages during magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or electrocautery procedures. In one embodiment, the sensor/pacing module stores electrical energy from one or more power pulses and applies an appropriate pacing pulse to the pacing electrode when a pacing command is received from the CRM module, for example, during the download interval. In an alternative embodiment, pacemaker timing is provided by circuitry within the sensor/pacing module, autonomous from the CRM module. In both embodiments, the sensor/pacing module may generate or store electrical energy for application of an appropriate pacing pulse to the pacing electrode at intervals defined by either the CRM module or the circuitry within the sensor/pacing/measurement module itself. In another embodiment, the pacing interval is modified or synchronized with a second digital electrode in another location by the generator module by downloading the appropriate command to the sensor/pacing/measurement module.

[0230] In one embodiment, the circuitry includes current and voltage limiting features known to those skilled in the art to provide protection from defibrillator discharges, either from an external or implantable defibrillator. In one embodiment, series-connected oppositely oriented zener diodes are provided for defibrillation protection as described, for example, by Langer (U.S. Patent No. 4,440,172, incorporated by reference herein).

[0231] Referring to FIG. 25, three embodiments are described to implement a hybrid approach for performing pacing and physiological sensing using the same lead.

[0232] In the first embodiment, the output voltage during the pacer pulse is provided by a CRM device 306. Alternatively, in another embodiment, an output voltage storage capacitor and a charge pump are provided by a device 320, such as a POD.

[0233] Sensing may be performed according to at least three different embodiments. In one embodiment, the circuitry is located in a device 320, such as the POD, and a digital signal is provided when a p-wave is detected. In the second embodiment, an electrode 328 is switched by switch 322 onto the lead conductor 324 either before or after the output capacitor 326, and the CRM device 306 contains the sensing circuit. In this embodiment, the lead 324 may be pre-charged to the electrode voltage to avoid generating signals on the electrode 328. A third embodiment is a hybrid of the first two. In the third embodiment, an IEGM signal is amplified by an amplifier 330 and applied to the lead 324. For all three of these options, IEGM sampling is time-multiplexed in the frame sequence.

[0234] Either on-chip or back-to-back Zener diodes 332 are provided in the device 320, thereby keeping the RF path (during MRI) small in order to improve immunity.

2. Upgrade from Stand-Alone to combination system

[0235] Referring now to **FIG. 26A**, in one embodiment, the same sensor and lead 318 can be used either as part of a Stand-Alone system (such as a heart monitoring system, pressure monitoring and feedback system, HeartPOD, POD, or apparatus for treating congestive heart failure, as described above) or as part of a combination system that includes a CRM or automated therapy system. This flexibility allows for the implantation of a Stand-Alone sensor that can be “upgraded” to include pacing and/or defibrillation therapy if the need arises without having to implant an additional lead. The combination system also allows the communication coil 302 of the apparatus for treating congestive heart failure (such as that described above with reference to **FIG. 4**) to be removed and replaced with a CRM 306. Furthermore, in one embodiment, the sensor electronics (which in one embodiment are located in a distal sensor package implanted within the patient’s heart, as schematically illustrated in **FIG. 26B**) include the pace/sense circuitry that allows it to be used as a smart “digital” electrode in conjunction with a CRM device, as described below, to provide a digital pacemaker.

[0236] In an alternate embodiment, an additional lead conductor is included to allow operation with pacing and sensing electronics located within the CRM housing 306 of a CRM device. In one embodiment, a sensor or sensor module 320 is coupled to the distal end of a lead 318, which has a proximal IS1 connector 316, as is familiar to those of skill in the art. In one embodiment, an upgrade is performed by surgically opening the subcutaneous pocket, unplugging the IS1 connector 316 from the RF coil antenna 302, or pressure monitoring and feedback implanted module, and plugging the lead 318 into an IS1 port 317 of a CRM housing 306, as described in greater detail below.

[0237] In one embodiment, the sensor is externally powered either by a tuned coil 303 (Stand-Alone mode) at 125 kHz (although any other suitable frequency could be used) or “power” pulses (CRM mode) at a frame frequency. In the Stand-Alone mode, data from the sensor is telemetered to a patient advisory module (not shown) using reflected impedance. Other telemetry schemes may also be employed, such as disclosed, for example, in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,681,111 and 5,058,581 to Silvian, incorporated herein by reference. Electronics provided with the device, such as the POD or distally implanted sensor module, contain circuitry that detects whether an incoming signal is a 125 kHz signal (as is provided by the pressure monitoring and feedback implanted module, in one embodiment) or a frame power pulse (as is provided from a CRM device, in one embodiment) at a frequency between 500 Hz and 20 kHz. This autosensing functionality allows the pressure monitoring and feedback system described herein to be “upgraded,” whereby the additional functionality of a CRM system, such as a pacemaker or defibrillator or other such device, is able to be provided by merely changing, or swapping one implanted component, or module, with another. At least two methods are provided for determining which mode (Stand-Alone or combination) is operable, as described below with reference to **FIGS. 26A-D**. One method is based on frequency discrimination and the other is based amplitude discrimination. In both cases, the signals are half-wave rectified by rectifier 300 to provide power for the sensor (and pace/sense) electronics. As is recognized by the skilled artisan, full-wave rectification could be employed as an alternative. Two embodiments of rectifier 300 are provided in **FIGS. 26C-D**.

[0238] In one embodiment, in the Stand-Alone mode (e.g., when a CRM 306 is not present), the 125 kHz signal is output from a tuned coil 302 that resides in a subcutaneous pocket. The 125 kHz signal is rectified to provide DC power for the sensor electronics of the sensor module 320 and a 125 kHz clock for operation and timing. A shorting FET, which in one embodiment is located within communications module 304, is placed across the 125 kHz input to provide a reflected impedance signal that can be detected by the external device for telemetry of the sensor(s) output. The FET is disabled after power up until the POD has determined that the Stand-Alone mode is operable. Although full wave rectification could be used, in one embodiment, half wave rectification is employed. Detection of the unused half cycle is one of the methods used to differentiate between the two modes of operation. In one embodiment, power is turned off to the pacing and sensing electronics in the Stand-Alone mode.

[0239] In one embodiment, in the CRM mode, the sensor lead 318 is attached to a CRM device 306 that provides a power pulse at a fixed frame rate, a pace trigger signal, and apparatus for changing memory registers in the POD. The power pulse is rectified to provide DC power for the POD electronics. The reflected impedance shorting FET used in the Stand-Alone mode is disabled at power up and in CRM mode. A frame clock detector 308 is employed to obtain the frame clock that is input to a DPLL 310 (digital phase lock loop). The DPLL 310, by way of example, includes or is coupled to an oscillator 311 with electronic frequency adjustment with its output used for operation and timing for the POD electronics. This clock is fed into a divide by N counter 314 whose output is coupled to the other input to an up/down counter 312 whose output is connected to the frequency adjustment of the oscillator 311 coupled to the DPLL 310. The divide by N counter 314 output may be coupled directly to the up/down counter 312 (or bit counter 312), or may be coupled to a clock select module 314 which is coupled to the bit counter 312, as shown in FIG. 26B. This provides for an internal clock, which is N times the frame clock and is synchronized to the frame clock. In another embodiment, an analog PLL is used instead of a digital PLL. The DPLL 310 also provides a signal to indicate the mode of operation (the frequency discrimination method). If the DPLL 310 is locked at its limit (no sync), then Stand-Alone operation is indicated. In the CRM mode, the CRM device 306 goes to high

impedance between power pulses during the upload period, thereby allowing the POD to send sensor output(s) and a pacing sense-detect signal to the CRM device 306.

[0240] Since the physical connection is different between the two modes of operation, the detection mechanisms for mode determination can be optionally latched at power up and then disabled to conserve power.

[0241] One embodiment of the present invention provides for a novel variation of a standard IS1 header 316. In conventional IS1 headers, typically a spring connector is employed for the outer conductor and a setscrew is used for the inner conductor. Both the 125 kHz for the Stand-Alone device and the digital power/signaling signals of the combination device need to be isolated from the body and especially the heart in a fail-safe manner. Advantageously, in one embodiment of the present invention, the active conductor is the inner conductor of a coaxial lead and a spring connector is used for the inner conductor in the IS1 header 316. This assures that, even in a damaged lead or leaking setscrew seal, all leakage paths to the body are completely surrounded by the common coax outer conductor, and therefore isolated from the body.

[0242] In one embodiment, the system is designed to operate in at least two different configurations, and in at least two modes of operation. A first mode is the "Stand-Alone Configuration." A second mode is "the CRM Combination" (or "Combination Configuration"). One advantage of a multi-configuration system is that it allows the device to be implanted as a Stand-Alone system for CHF therapy and later to be upgraded for use with a CRM device if the patient's condition changes. In the Combination Configuration, in one embodiment, the sensor module 320 acts as a pace/sense electrode for the CRM device.

[0243] In one embodiment, there are three modes of operation based on the configuration: (1) A "Power-Up Mode" which is used to automatically detect whether the Stand-Alone Configuration or the Combination Configuration is present. This mode is entered into when the power is applied to the sensor module 320. As described below by way of example, at least two alternative methods are described for detecting the configuration. Alternative methods will be apparent to one skilled in the art; (2) A Stand-Alone Configuration; and (3) A Combination configuration.

[0244] In one embodiment, the CRM module logic includes logic to detect any problems with the sensor module 320. Should any unrecoverable problem be detected, the CRM module (which in one embodiment can optionally be limited to be under physician supervision) stops the power pulses to the sensor module 320 and restarts, thus allowing for a new power-up sequence.

[0245] *Communication block:* In one embodiment, a communication block 304 is provided. In one embodiment, the communication block 304 is responsible for the bidirectional communication. The Mode and PwrUp inputs define how the device operates. Incoming communication in a preferred embodiment is by FSK on the 125 kHz carrier for the Stand-Alone Configuration and by digital command signals between power pulses for the Combination Configuration. Outgoing communication in one embodiment is by reflected impedance for the Stand-Alone Configuration and by digital signals between power pulses for the Combination Configuration. During the power-up mode, all outgoing communication is suppressed. The figure for Combination Configuration signals depicts a RZ code. One skilled in the art will understand that other encoding methods, such as NRZ, Manchester, etc., can also be used in accordance with several embodiments of the current invention.

[0246] *Voltage Detector Block:* In one embodiment, a voltage detector block 322 is provided. In one embodiment, the voltage detector block 322 detects the operating configuration after power is applied (during the power-up mode). In one embodiment, it only needs to be powered during this brief time and can be disabled to conserve power. The voltage detector block 322 detects whether or not there are 125 kHz excursions above Vdd, which may occur in the Stand-Alone Configuration.

[0247] *Clock Detector Block:* In one embodiment, a clock detector block 308 is provided. In one embodiment, this block 308 is a comparator with two thresholds that outputs a digital clock signal from the signal on the lead. In the Stand-Alone Configuration, the threshold is set to Vdd and the output is a 125 kHz square wave. In both the Combination Configuration and Power-Up Mode, the threshold is set to approximately 0.5V above Vss (although other thresholds may be used) and the output is used to recover the frame sync which are the power pulses in the combination mode and 125 kHz during the power-up mode in the Stand-Alone Configuration. One reason for the 0.5 V threshold is to allow signaling

pulses to have lower amplitude than the power pulses and will not be erroneously detected as clock pulses (and will also dissipate less power). Alternatively, the midpoint supply voltage may be used as a threshold, with equal amplitude power and signaling pulses, provided that the DPLL 310 and related timing provides for a defined gap between the last signaling pulse and the next power pulse.

[0248] *Clock Divider Block:* In one embodiment, a clock divider block 314 is provided. In one embodiment, this block 314 divides down the 125 kHz to provide a bit clock in the Stand-Alone configuration. It is disabled in the CRM configuration.

[0249] *Oscillator block:* In one embodiment, an oscillator block 311 is provided. In one embodiment, this block 311 contains a capacitor that is charged up from V_{ss} to a settable threshold voltage. A short reset pulse is provided to fully discharge the capacitor after the threshold reached and if a reset pulse is provided. The threshold is determined by the oscillator control lines that specify to either to increase or to decrease the threshold by a small delta V. In an alternative embodiment, the capacitor is arranged in a binary array and the DPLL 310 is an up/ down counter.

[0250] *Clock Select Block:* In one embodiment, a clock select block 314 is provided. In one embodiment, this block 314 switches the bit clock to the sensor module's internal oscillator output for the CRM Combination Configuration and during the power-up mode. For the Stand-Alone Configuration, the bit clock 314 is switched to the output of the 125 kHz clock divider.

[0251] *Bit Counter Block:* In one embodiment, a bit counter block 312 is provided. In one embodiment, this block 312 is a divide by N counter that is reset by the Frame sync in the CRM configuration and during power-up. It provides the bit timing sequence for each frame. During power-up, in the Stand-Alone Configuration, it is substantially held reset by the 125 kHz "frame sync" pulses.

[0252] *DPLL Block:* In one embodiment, a DPLL block 310 is provided. In one embodiment, the DPLL 310 provides the feedback to control the internal oscillator frequency to be N times the frame sync. In one embodiment, it also determines the configuration during power-up mode by detecting that the Bit counter 312 is stuck reset.

[0253] *Rectifier Block:* In one embodiment, a rectifier block 300 is provided. Two alternative embodiments are shown in greater detail in FIGS. 26C-D. In the embodiment of FIG. 26C, Vdd is tied to the outer lead winding which is tied to the Indifferent Electrode. A schottky diode is provided to protect the CMOS from the positive swing on the inner "Lead" winding in the Stand-Alone configuration. Alternatively, a full wave rectifier could be used. A separate charge pump and pacing output voltage storage cap is provided to generate and store the pace voltage. In the second rectifier embodiment, which is illustrated in FIG. 26D, the charge pump and storage cap are omitted from the sensor module. Instead, a MOS switch is provided between Vdd and the Indifferent. This switch is normally ON but is switched OFF during a pacer pulse so that the pace voltage is stored in the CRM device and switched out to the distal electrode. Additional circuitry is provided to handle start-up and well switching issues.

[0254] *Control Circuit Block:* Referring back to FIG. 26B, in one embodiment, a control circuit block 324 is provided. In one embodiment, this block 324 provides substantially all the memory storage, logic and timing required for operation.

[0255] *Measurement Circuit Block:* In one embodiment, a measurement circuit block 326 is provided. In one embodiment, this block 326 provides substantially all the measurement circuitry to measure pressure, temperature, etc.

[0256] *Input Amp & Filter Block:* In one embodiment, an input amp & filter block 328 is provided. In one embodiment, this block 328 contains an AC coupled amplifier, filter and window comparator for the detection of heart depolarization signals (P-wave and/or R-wave). The circuits for this function are well known in the art. This block 328 is shown connected to a separate sensing electrode. Normally the pacing and sensing electrode are the same, which is still possible in this invention by merely shorting these points together. Advantageously, one embodiment provides for the possibility of separate pacing and sensing electrodes without having to have a separate lead conductor and extra connector pin. This allows each electrode to be optimized independently for each electrode. In addition, the recovery discharge voltage is eliminated on the sensing electrode, allowing for sensing of the induced P or R-wave for capture verification and/or threshold tracking. This advantage is due to the inclusion of the pacing & sensing electronics remotely in the sensor module. If

two distinct electrodes are employed, additional defibrillator protection may be needed for the sense amplifier. This protection is relatively easy because the impedances can be much higher and the induced currents are easily handled.

[0257] *Defibrillation Protection Block:* In one embodiment, a defibrillation protection block 330 is provided. In one embodiment, this block 330 is composed of two back-to-back zener diodes or other method as is known in the art.

[0258] One embodiment of an upgradeable system illustrated in **FIG. 28** and **FIG. 29**. The system of FIG. 28 illustrates a “Stand-Alone” embodiment, and includes an implantable housing 400 coupled to an implantable lead 402 with a connector 404. In one embodiment, the housing 400 is the housing 7 as described above. In another embodiment, the lead 402 is the lead 318 or lead 10 as described above. In one embodiment, connector 404 is the IS1 header 316, IS1 port 317, or connector 10, as described above. The connector 404 may be any connector known to those of skill in the art used to couple an implantable lead to an implantable housing.

[0259] The lead 402 is connected to a sensor module (not shown) as described in greater detail above. The lead 402 is also electrically coupled to an indifferent electrode 406, as is well known to those of skill in the art. The implantable housing 400 of the Stand-Alone embodiment includes an antenna 408. In one embodiment, the antenna 408 is the antenna 162 or coil 302 as described in greater detail above. The antenna 408 may be any coil of wire as is known to those of skill in the art, which may be used for telemetry communications with an external device, such as a patient advisory module (not shown), as described in greater detail above with reference to FIGS. 4 and 5. In one embodiment, the antenna 408 is coupled to the lead 402 via the connector 404, and functions as described above.

[0260] One embodiment of a “combination” unit is described with reference to FIG. 29. As described above, in one embodiment, when the Stand-Alone unit is upgraded to provide CRM functionality in addition to left atrial pressure sensing and patient feedback, the housing of the Stand-Alone system may be exchanged with the housing of a combination system without having to provide an additional lead for cardiac rhythm management.

[0261] As illustrated in FIG. 29, in one embodiment, the housing 400 of the combination unit is coupled to a lead 402 via a connector 404 as described above. In one

embodiment, the lead is coupled to an indifferent electrode 406, also as described above. In one embodiment, the housing 400 of the combination unit is the same as the housing 400 of a Stand-Alone unit, or CRM housing 306, as described in greater detail above.

[0262] The housing 400 of the combination unit includes an antenna 408, battery 410, telemetry module 412, communication and power pulses module 414, programming module 416, and pacing circuitry 418. The battery 410 provides power to the components within the housing 410, as well as those within the sensor module (not shown), as describe above. The telemetry module 412 provides communication between the combination unit and the patient advisory module (not shown). The communication and power pulses module 414 control communication between the sensor module (not shown) and the housing 400 components as well as power distribution to the sensor module from the battery 410. Programming module 416 provides programming control over the system, including the pacing module 418, which control the transmission of electrical pulses or stimuli as required by the CRM device.

[0263] FIG. 29 illustrates one embodiment of a CRM Combination configuration. In this configuration, the housing 400 contains a battery 410 that powers both the CRM device and the sensor module (not shown). The communication and power pulse circuit 414 provides power to and communicates with the sensor module via the lead conductor 402 using, in one embodiment, for example, the coding scheme described with respect to FIG. 24. The communication circuit 414 also decodes physiological sensor signals, such as pressure signals, a-wave and/or p-wave sense signals received from the sensor module via the lead 402. Sense signals received by the communication circuitry 414 are passed to the pacing circuitry 418 where they are used to determine if and when to provide a pacing stimulus.

[0264] In one embodiment, the pacing circuitry 418 triggers a pacing stimulus by sending a signal to the communication circuitry 414, which sets the appropriate pulse trigger bit to the sensor module as described above with respect to FIG. 24. In one embodiment, the pacing circuitry 418 delivers the pacing stimulus to the lead 402 a predetermined interval after setting the pulse trigger bit, and commanding the sensor module to allow the pacing stimulus to pass from the lead 402 through the sensor module electronics to the pacing electrode. In another embodiment, the pacing stimulus is applied to the pacing electrode

from a storage capacitor within the sensor module when a pulse trigger bit is received by the sensor module from the communication circuitry 414.

[0265] In one embodiment, various operational modes and parameters are programmed using an external programming device (not shown) that communicates with the implanted pacemaker transcutaneously using telemetry system 412, which decodes programming commands from a programmer and passes them to the programming circuitry 416. In one embodiment, physiological sensor signals, such as but not limited to pressure, temperature, or internal electrocardiogram signals, are passed from the communication circuitry 414 to the telemetry circuitry 412 for telemetry to the external patient advisory module, such as the patient advisory module illustrated and described above with reference to FIG. 4. In one embodiment, physiological sensor signals are also communicated from the communication circuitry 414 to the programming circuitry 416, where they are used to at least partially to control the operation of the pacemaker in response to the patient's condition.

3. Automated therapy

[0266] According to one embodiment of the current invention, a method for treating cardiovascular disease in a medical patient includes implanting a physiological sensor package and a therapy delivery unit (e.g., the "treatment system") within the patient's body, operating the physiological sensor package to generate a signal indicative of a physiological parameter, communicating the signals indicative of the physiological parameters to a signal processing apparatus, operating the signal processing apparatus to generate a signal indicative of an appropriate therapeutic treatment, and communicating to the patient the signal indicative of the appropriate therapeutic treatment. The patient may then administer to him or herself the prescribed therapeutic treatment indicated by the signal or instructions. In another embodiment, the signal indicative of the appropriate therapeutic treatment is communicated to an automated therapy unit to generate an automatic therapy regime.

a. Dynamic Prescription

[0267] In one embodiment, the automatic therapy regime is based upon a programmed dynamic prescription. "Dynamic prescription," as used herein, shall mean the information that is provided to the patient for therapy, including instructions on how to alter

therapy based on changes in the patient's physiologic parameters. The instructions may be provided by a physician, practitioner, pharmacist, caregiver, automated server, database, etc. The information communicated to the patient includes authorizing new prescriptions for the patient and modifying the patient's medicinal dosage and schedule. The "dynamic prescription" information also includes communicating information which is not "prescribed" in its traditional sense, such as instructions to the patient to take bed rest, modify fluid intake, modify physical activity, modify nutrient intake, modify alcohol intake, perform a "pill count," measure additional physiological parameters, make a doctor's appointment, rush to the emergency room, call the paramedics, etc. One skilled in the art will understand that numerous other instructions may be beneficially provided to the patient predicated at least in part upon measurement of one or more physiological parameters in accordance with various embodiments of the present invention.

b. Therapy delivery units

[0268] According to another embodiment, a therapy delivery unit is provided, including but not limited to a system for releasing bioactive substances from an implanted reservoir, a system for controlling electrical pacing of the heart, and cardiac assist devices including pumps, oxygenators, artificial hearts, cardiac restraining devices, ultrafiltration devices, intravascular and external counterpulsation devices, continuous positive airway pressure devices, and a host of related devices for treating cardiovascular conditions where knowledge of the left atrial pressure would be beneficial for optimal therapy delivery. Cardiac electrical pacing may be controlled in response to changes in physiological parameters in accordance with the present invention by, for example, AV delay optimization or any number of other methods, as are well known to one skilled in the art of cardiology.

[0269] According to one embodiment of the invention, the therapy delivery unit is implanted according to the methods described herein for the pressure transducer.

i. Drug Infusion

[0270] In one embodiment of the invention, a drug delivery unit is provided. In this embodiment, intravenous or subcutaneous, bolus or continuous infusion of drug from an implantable drug delivery unit can be triggered or regulated by the signal processing

apparatus when certain predefined conditions are met. In one embodiment, automatic drug delivery or other therapeutic measure is used as a last resort “rescue mode” when the monitored physiological parameters indicate the patient’s condition requires urgent therapeutic response. Typically, in “rescue mode”, the patient’s condition is not amenable to a change in oral medication dose (see “Dynamic Prescription”). Thus, in one embodiment, this invention includes both the dynamic prescription with patient signaling, and automated therapy via electrical stimulation, drug infusion, or other therapy delivery unit. Drugs that may be so administered include but are not limited to natriuretic peptides (e.g., Natricor), diuretics (e.g., furosimide), and inotropes (e.g., epinephrine, norepinephrine, dopamine, dobutamine, milrinone). In one embodiment, rescue mode emergency drug infusion, defibrillation, or other therapy is performed automatically based at least in part on signals indicative of the patient’s condition derived from the one or more sensors of the invention. In another embodiment, rescue mode therapy is initiated by the present invention only after receiving doctor authorization to deliver the therapy. In one embodiment, doctor authorization is given by entering a password into the external patient signaling/communication module. This permits potentially dangerous emergency therapy to be delivered only after consultation with and authorization by a qualified healthcare professional.

[0271] In one embodiment, dosimetry for multiple drugs or other associated therapeutic devices is relayed based on parameter values as input to a parameter-driven prescription. In one embodiment, the system essentially replicates, in the home setting, the way inpatients are managed based on their doctor’s standing orders in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of a hospital. In the ICU, nurses periodically look at real-time physiologic values from diagnostic catheters, and administer medications based on predetermined orders by the patient’s attending physician. One embodiment of the present invention accomplishes the same thing. In one embodiment, wireless communications technology is integrated with diagnostic and treatment methods that are well established in cardiology. As such, the system is designed to be convenient and time-efficient for both the patient and his physician. The combination of monitoring key physiologic parameters and the patient’s own physician’s prescription drive a real-time feedback loop control system for maintaining homeostasis.

Thus, in one embodiment, the system comprises an integrated patient management system tightly and directly linking implantable sensor diagnostics with pharmacologic and other therapies. As a result, this therapeutic approach enables better, more cost effective care, improves out-of-hospital time, and empowers patients to play a larger and more effective role in their own healthcare.

[0272] In one embodiment, a portable system for continuously or routinely monitoring one or more parameters indicative of the condition of a patient is provided. Depending upon changes in the indicated condition, the system determines, based on parameter-driven instructions from the patient's physician, a particular course of therapy. The course of therapy is designed to manage or correct, as much as possible, the patient's chronic condition. In one embodiment, the system communicates the course of therapy directly to the patient or to someone who assists the patient in the patient's daily care, such as, for example, but not limited to, a spouse, an aid, a visiting nurse, etc.

C. Telemetry

[0273] In one embodiment of the invention, one or more signals are communicated between the permanently implanted components of the system and a component of the system external to the patient's body. In one embodiment, signaling from the implanted to the external components is achieved by reflected impedance using radio frequency energy originating from the external device, and signaling from the external components to the internal components is achieved by frequency or amplitude shifting of radio frequency energy originating from the external device. Thus, in this embodiment, the current invention allows for telemetry of data from within the heart without transmitting radio frequency energy from the implanted device, advantageously resulting in significantly reduced power consumption compared to implants that perform telemetry by transmitting signals from within the body.

[0274] In another embodiment, signaling from the implanted to the external components is achieved through the metal housing of the implanted device using the method of Silvian (U.S. Patent No. 6,301,504) incorporated by reference in its entirety herein.

[0275] In yet another embodiment, signaling from the implanted housing containing components of a CRM device is achieved via an antenna embedded within a

dielectric around the periphery of the housing, as taught, for example, by Amundson et al. in US Pat. No. 6,614,406, included herein by reference.

D. Power

[0276] In one embodiment of the invention, the implanted apparatus is powered by a battery located within an implanted housing, similar to that of a cardiac pacemaker, as is well known in the art of cardiac pacing. In another embodiment, the implanted apparatus is powered by an external power source through inductive, acoustical or RF coupling. In one embodiment, power is provided to the implanted device using 125 kHz emissions emitted from an electrical coil placed outside the body. In one embodiment power and data telemetry are provided by the same energy signal. In one embodiment of the system a second electrical coil is implanted inside the body at a location under the skin near the patient's collarbone, similar to the placement of the generator housing of an implantable pacemaker.

E. Physical Location of System Components

[0277] In one embodiment of the present invention, the apparatus for diagnosing and treating cardiovascular disease is modular and consists of a plurality of modules. Each module contains hardware, and may contain one or more software programs. The component modules can be physically located in different places and their functions can differ dependent on the particular design of the modules. **FIG. 4** shows one embodiment of the current invention, in which the first implantable module 5 of the apparatus is implanted within the patient. A patient advisory module 6 is located external to the patient's body and generally resides with the patient or his direct caregivers. A third module (not shown in **FIG. 4**) may reside with the physician. Each module performs multiple functions and some of the functions may be performed on multiple modules. In one embodiment, the modules consist of component sub-modules that perform a particular function, such as described above.

1. Leads

[0278] Although the pressure transducer in the embodiment produces an electrical signal indicative of pressures in its vicinity and, accordingly, an electrical lead is used to transmit the signals to the electronic circuitry, other types of pressure transducers may be used as well. For example, the pressure transducer and lead might comprise a tube filled with an incompressible fluid leading from the site in the body where the pressure is to be

measured back to a transducer in another location. Signals in the form of pressures in the incompressible fluid indicate pressures at the site of interest, and those pressures are sensed by the transducer and utilized by the electronic circuitry in generating signals indicative of appropriate therapeutic treatments. Signals in other forms may be used as well and may be transmitted, for example, by fiber optic means, or by any other suitable electrical, electro-mechanical, mechanical, chemical, or other mode of signal transmission.

[0279] Moreover, although the signal lead in one embodiment is of an appropriate length so that the housing containing the electronic circuitry can be implanted in the region of the patient's shoulder, in alternative embodiments the lead may be of virtually any useful length, including zero. In one embodiment, an integrated unit is used in which the pressure transducer is disposed directly on the housing and the entire device is implanted inside or very near to the site at which pressure measurement is desired, for example the left atrium of the patient's heart.

II. SYSTEM OPERATION

A. Signal Processing

[0280] FIG. 27 is a schematic diagram of operational circuitry that in one embodiment is located inside the housing 7 and is suitable for use in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The apparatus depicted in FIG. 27 includes digital processors, but the same concept could also be implemented with analog circuitry, as is well known to those of skill in the art.

[0281] As described above, in one embodiment, the system of the invention includes a pressure transducer 73 permanently implanted to monitor fluid pressure within the left atrium of the patient's heart. Moreover, the system may include one or more additional sensors 75 configured to monitor pressure at a location outside the left atrium, or a different physical parameter inside the left atrium or elsewhere. For each sensor 73, 75, a sensor lead 77, 80 conveys signals from the sensor 73, 75 to a monitoring unit 82 disposed inside the housing of the unit. Alternatively, several sensors may be located in a compact sensor package or sensor module as, for example, illustrated in FIGS. 1, 2, 4, 22 and 23. In this case, the several sensors may share a single sensor lead for conveying signals from the sensors to the monitoring unit or a telemetry antenna. It should also be noted that the sensor

lead connecting the pressure transducer to the monitoring apparatus might also be combined with or run parallel to another lead such as an electrical EKG sensor lead or a cardiac pacing lead, either of which might be placed in or near the left atrium.

[0282] In one embodiment, when the signal from the left atrial pressure transducer 73 enters the monitoring unit 82, the signal is first passed through a low-pass filter 85 to smooth the signal and reduce noise. The signal is then transmitted to an analog-to-digital converter 88, which transforms the signals into a stream of digital data values, which are in turn stored in digital memory 90. From the memory 90, the data values are transmitted to a data bus 92, along which they are transmitted to other components of the circuitry to be processed and archived. The stream of binary digital values may be immediately transmitted to a telemetry device external to the patient one bit at a time as they are generated from the most significant bit to the least significant bit by a successive approximation analog-to-digital converter. An additional filter 95, analog-to-digital converter 97, and digital memory area 100 may be provided as shown for each optional sensor 75 whenever such a sensor 75 is present. In another embodiment, several sensors share one analog-to-digital converter.

[0283] In one embodiment, the digital data on the data bus 92, are stored in a non-volatile data archive memory area 103. The archive 103 stores the data for later retrieval, for example, by a physician at the patient's next regularly scheduled office visit. The data may be retrieved, for example, by transcutaneous telemetry through a transceiver 105 incorporated into the unit. The same transceiver may serve as a route for transmission of signals into the unit, for example, for reprogramming the unit without explanting it from the patient. The physician may thereby develop, adjust, or refine operation of the unit, for example, as new therapies are developed or depending on the history and condition of any individual patient. By way of an additional example, reprogramming the implanted device could include changing the sampling frequency for digitizing the pressure, IEGM or other waveforms, or selecting which sensor data is to be monitored. Devices for transcutaneous signal transmission are known in the art in connection with pacemakers and implantable cardiac defibrillators (collectively known as cardiac rhythm management apparatus), and the transceiver used in the present invention may be generally similar to such known apparatus.

[0284] In one embodiment of the present invention, the digital data indicative of the pressure detected in the left atrium, as well as data corresponding to the other conditions detected by other sensors, where such are included, are transferred via the data bus 92 into a central processing unit 107, which processes the data based in part on algorithms and other data stored in non-volatile program memory 110. The central processing unit 107 then, based on the data and the results of the processing, sends an appropriate command to a patient signaling device 113, which sends a signal understandable by the patient and based upon which the patient may take appropriate action such as maintaining or changing the patient's drug regimen or contacting his or her physician.

[0285] Circuits for extracting relevant components from a pressure waveform are familiar to those skilled in the art. For example, a low pass filter element may be used to extract the long-term average, or "DC" component. In one embodiment, the outputs of overlapping low pass filters, one designed to include only frequencies lower than respiratory cycle frequencies, and the other designed to include respiratory but not cardiac cycle frequencies, are sampled at a fixed time in each cardiac cycle and subtracted to derive the respiratory component. In general, the respiratory contribution to the waveform is negative during inspiration and positive during expiration, with a mean contribution of zero. Thus, the long-term average of the pressure waveform is equal to the average of the cardiac component. The term of the long-term average is chosen to be long compared to the respiration rate but short compared to the rate of mean pressure change due to changes in a change in the patient's condition, so that slowly changing physiological information relevant to managing the patient's condition is not lost.

B. Signal Communication

[0286] In several embodiments of the invention, the patient signaling device 113 comprises a mechanical vibrator housed inside the housing of the system. In one embodiment, the vibrator delivers a small, harmless, but readily noticeable electrical shock to the patient. In some embodiments, a low power transmitter configured to transmit information transcutaneously to a remote receiver, which could include a display screen or other means for communicating instructions to the patient. In one embodiment, the system includes communication devices for communicating information back to a base location.

These communication devices include, but are not limited to cellular or land-line telephone equipment or a device connected to the Internet, for communicating information back to a base location. In one embodiment, this is used, to transmit information concerning the patient's condition back to a hospital or doctor's office, or to transmit information concerning the patient's prescription usage back to a pharmacy.

[0287] In one embodiment, the signal processing and patient signaling components of the invention are combined into a patient advisory module, external to the patient's body. The patient advisory module further comprises a telemetry module to receive pressure and other physiological data from the implanted sensor system via wireless telemetry. This configuration has the advantage that the external device may be based in part on a general purpose computer such as a personal data assistant (PDA), allowing increased flexibility and complexity in signal processing and prescription algorithms. An additional advantage is that it provides essentially unlimited storage for digital physiological data from the patient, as well as for information on medications and other relevant information to help the patient and physician manage congestive heart failure.

[0288] Yet a further advantage of the externalized patient signaling device component is that a much richer and easier to use interface with the patient is facilitated using a display screen and/or audio communication with the patient. In one embodiment, a reminder function is incorporated in the external device such that the patient is prompted to initiate measurement just prior to scheduled medications or other therapy. The patient is then advised of the appropriate doses of medications and/or other therapies based on the measurements and his physician's dynamic prescription.

[0289] In one embodiment, the patient advisory module is external and serves as a treatment and medications record. In this use, the patient will be asked to verify which of the prescribed medications were taken and which were, for whatever reason, were skipped, thus creating a record of compliance with the dynamic management program. This function will permit the physician to better manage the patient and, additionally, will improve patient compliance. Yet another advantage of the externalized patient advisory module is that it can be easily integrated with a cellular telephone or PDA/cell phone combination, allowing

automated telemetry of alerts and/or physiological data to a remote health care provider such as the patient's physician, hospital, nursing clinic, or monitoring service.

[0290] Apparatus as described herein may also be useful in helping patients comply with their medication schedule. In that case, the patient advisory module could be programmed to signal the patient each time the patient is to take medication, *e.g.*, four times daily. This might be done via an audio or vibratory signal as described above. In versions of the apparatus where the patient signaling device includes apparatus for transmitting messages to a hand held device, tabletop display, or another remote device, written or visual instructions could be provided. In one embodiment, apparatus generates spoken instructions, for example, synthesized speech or the actual recorded voice of the physician, to instruct the patient regarding exactly what medication is to be taken and when.

[0291] Where the system includes apparatus for communicating information back to a base location, *e.g.*, the hospital, doctor's office, or a pharmacy, the system in one embodiment, tracks the doses remaining in each prescription and to reorder automatically as the remaining supply of any particular drug becomes low.

[0292] In one embodiment of this invention, the external device communicates with a personal computer (PC) in the doctor's office either directly when the patient is present for an office visit, or via electronic communications, including, but not limited to, a telephone modem or the internet. During this communication, data is uploaded from the external device to the PC, including the records of physiological measurements, symptoms, and medication compliance, as well as information regarding the operation and calibration of the implanted device. Software on the PC displays the patient information, and the doctor enters a new dynamic prescription or edits the existing one. The PC then downloads the new or edited dynamic prescription to the external device. Re-calibration of the pressure transducer in the external device may be performed relative to a reference manometer in the physician's office.

[0293] In one embodiment, the physician's PC maintains a database of all the patients under medical management by the physician using the device of this invention. The database includes the patients identifying, demographic, and medical information, the implantable device's unique identification number. For each patient, the database maintains

a record of all data uploaded from the external device, device calibration records, patient dynamic prescription records, and compliance records.

[0294] In one embodiment, data stored in the external patient advisory module is uploaded to the physician's PC at the time of the patient's regular office visit. The external device is placed in a data interface cradle connected to the PC, and the data is transferred. In one embodiment of the data transfer, the external device is a modified personal data assistant such as a Palm Pilot, and the data interface cradle is the cradle used by such PDA devices for data synchronization with a personal computer.

[0295] In another embodiment, the data from the external device is uploaded to the physician PC via the Internet, telephone, or cellular telephone network. In this case, the data may be uploaded at regular intervals, or whenever the patient or physician determines there is a need for physician review of the patient's management.

[0296] The prescription editor is a software program on the physician's PC that allows the physician to create, view, and modify the dynamic prescription for each patient. The dynamic prescription may consist of sets of prescribed treatments depending on the values of one or more physiological measurements, and/or patient symptoms, and/or changes and/or rates of change of measurements or symptoms (collectively, input parameters). A prescription editor allows the physician to define thresholds for each input parameter and to define the combination of treatments to be administered for each possible combination of input parameters. In one embodiment, the prescription editor has a graphical user interface that displays the possible combinations of input parameter ranges and the corresponding treatments in a way that the physician can clearly see that all possibilities have been defined according to his intended management of the patient. In another embodiment, the prescription editor provides for the entry and/or editing by the physician of a set of rules relating data collected from the patient and treatments to be administered or instructions to be followed by the patient.

[0297] In one embodiment, the revised dynamic prescription and/or calibration data is downloaded from the physician's PC to the external device in the same way that data is uploaded from the external device to the physician's PC. In one embodiment, a unique identification number from the external device is used to verify the correct match between the

prescription and the patient. This unique identification number is obtained by the external device from the implanted device, which has a unique identification number programmed into its integrated processor chip at the time of manufacture. In one embodiment, a 27-bit unique identification code is permanently programmed into the implanted device at the time of manufacture. This identification number is sent along with data communicated from the implanted device to the external device to uniquely identify the implanted device to the external device software.

C. Power Management

[0298] In one embodiment, the circuitry of the invention may also include a power management module 115 configured to power down certain components of the system between times when those components are in use. Such components include, but are not limited to, analog-to-digital converters 88, 97, digital memories 90, 100, and central processing unit 107, as shown in **FIG. 27**. This helps to conserve battery power and thereby extend the useful life of the device so that it can remain operational inside the patient's body for extended periods between maintenance or replacement. Other circuitry and signaling modes may be devised by one skilled in the art.

[0299] In one embodiment, the implanted pressure monitor operates on transmitted power from outside the body, eliminating the need for an implanted battery. This approach is particularly well suited when periodic, as opposed to continuous, monitoring is required. In one embodiment, 125-kHz radio-frequency energy is transmitted from an external coil, through the patient's skin, and received by an implanted antenna coil connected to the electronics package of the implantable pressure monitor, as described above. The signal in the antenna coil is rectified and used to charge a capacitor, which in turn powers the measurement electronics. Low power telemetry of the measured data is performed by varying the impedance of the antenna coil circuit. In still another embodiment, the coil antenna is incorporated into or immediately adjacent to the pressure sensor within the heart.

III. EXAMPLES OF SYSTEM APPLICATION

A. Example 1

[0300] Exemplary modes of operation for an embodiment of the system of the invention are described as follows. The following Example illustrates various embodiments of the present invention and is not intended in any way to limit the invention.

[0301] In one embodiment, the system is programmed to power up once per hour to measure the left atrial pressure and other conditions as dictated by the configuration of the particular system and any other sensors that might be present. Left atrial pressure measurements are taken at a 20-Hertz sampling rate for sixty seconds, yielding 1200 data values reflective of the fluid pressure within the left atrium. The central processing unit then computes the mean left atrial pressure based on the stored values. Then, if the mean pressure is above a threshold value predetermined by the patient's physician, the central processing unit causes an appropriate communication to be sent to the patient via the patient signaling device.

[0302] A set of coded communications to the patient can be devised by the treating physician and encoded into the device either at the time of implantation or after implantation by transcutaneous programming using data transmission into the non-volatile program memory 110 via the transceiver 105. For example, assume that the physician has determined that a particular patient's mean left atrial pressure can be controlled at between 15 and 20 mm Hg under optimal drug therapy. This optimal drug therapy might have been found to comprise a drug regimen including 5 milligrams (mg) of Lisinopril, 40 mg of Lasix, 20 milliequivalents (mEq) of potassium chloride, 0.25 mg of Digoxin, and 25 mg of Carvedilol, all taken once per day.

[0303] The patient is implanted with the device and the device is programmed as follows. The device includes a pressure transducer implanted across the atrial septum such that the transducer responds to the difference in pressure between the right and left atria. This differential pressure is independent of changes in atmospheric pressure, and in most circumstances is well correlated with, and thus indicative of, the left atrial pressure. The device's programming provides for four possible "alert levels" that are specified according to mean differential atrial pressure detected by the transducer and computed in the central

processing unit, and that the patient signaling device is a mechanical vibrator capable of producing pulsed vibrations readily discernable by the patient.

[0304] At predetermined intervals, for example, hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, 3-4 times per day, or in response to a detected event, in response to a symptom, or in response to an instruction, the device measures the patient's mean left arterial pressure as described above, and determines the appropriate alert level for communication to the patient according to programming specified by the physician. For example, a mean left atrial pressure of less than 15 mm Hg could be indicative of some degree of over-medication and would correspond to alert level one. A pressure between 15 and 20 mm Hg would indicate optimal therapy and correspond to alert level two. A pressure between 20 and 30 mm Hg would indicate mild under-treatment or mild worsening in the patient's condition, and would correspond to alert level three. Finally, a mean left atrial pressure above 30 mm Hg would indicate a severe worsening in the patient's condition, and would correspond to alert level four.

[0305] When the proper alert level is determined, the device sends a two-second vibrating pulse to notify the patient that the device is about to communicate an alert level through a sequence of further vibrations. A few seconds later, a sequence of one to four relatively short (one second) vibratory pulses, the number corresponding to the applicable alert level, are made by the device and felt by the patient. The patient can easily count the pulses to determine the alert level, then continue or modify his own therapy with reference to a chart or other instructions prepared for him by the physician.

[0306] For example, two pulses corresponds to alert level two, an optimal or near optimal condition for that particular patient. In that case, the doctor's instructions tell the patient to continue his or her therapy exactly as before. The signal for alert level two is given once every 24 hours, at a fixed time each day. This serves mainly to reassure the patient that the device is working and all is well with his therapy, and to encourage the patient to keep taking the medication on a regular schedule.

[0307] One pulse, in contrast, corresponds to alert level one, and most likely some degree of recent over-medication. The doctor's orders then notify the patient to reduce or omit certain parts of his therapy until the return of alert level two. For example, the doctor's

instructions might tell the patient temporarily to stop taking Lasix, and to halve the dosage of Lisinopril to 2.5 mg per day. The coded signal is given to the patient once every twelve hours until the return of the alert level two condition.

[0308] Three pulses indicates alert level three, a condition of mild worsening in the patient's condition. Accordingly, the doctor's instructions notify the patient to increase the diuretic components of his therapy until alert level two returned. For example, the patient might be instructed to add to his normal doses an additional 80 mg of Lasix, twice daily, and 30 mEq of potassium chloride, also twice daily. The level three alert signal would be given every four hours until the patient's condition returned to alert level two.

[0309] Four pulses indicates alert level four, indicating a serious deterioration in the patient's condition. In this case, the patient is instructed to contact his physician and to increase his doses of diuretics, add a vasodilator, and discontinue the beta-blocker. For example, the patient might be instructed to add to his therapy an additional 80 mg of Lasix, twice daily, an additional 30 mEq of potassium chloride, twice daily, 60 mg of Imdur, twice daily, and to stop taking the beta-blocker, Carvedilol. The signal corresponding to alert level four would be given every two hours, or until the physician was able to intervene directly.

B. Example 2

[0310] In one embodiment, the system is configured as an externally powered implantable device with a sensor implanted in the intra-atrial septum. The pressure transducer of the sensor is exposed to the pressure in the left atrium. In one embodiment, the sensor is anchored in the septum such that the pressure transducer is substantially flush with the left atrial wall in fluid contact with blood in the left atrium. In another embodiment, the anchor is designed such that the pressure sensor extends a predetermined distance into the left atrium. In both these embodiments, the pressure sensor package is located in the septum with its proximal end extending back into the right atrium. A flexible lead extends from the proximal end of the sensor package back through the right atrium, into the superior vena cava, up to a subclavian vein, and out through the wall of the subclavian vein, terminating at an antenna coil assembly located in a subcutaneous pocket near the patient's clavicle, similar to a pacemaker generator housing.

[0311] The temperature at the site of the sensor and an internal electrocardiogram (IEGM) are also detected by the sensor. A digital signal is communicated to an external telemetry device via an antenna coil implanted under the patient's skin and connected to the sensor by a flexible lead. The sensor is powered by radio frequency energy received by the implanted coil from an external coil connected to the external telemetry device. The external telemetry device forms part of an external patient advisory module, that also includes a battery power source, a signal processor, and a patient signaling device that consists of a personal data assistant (PDA) with a display screen and software for communicating with the patient.

[0312] The external patient advisory module is programmed to alert the patient at times determined by the physician, preferably at the times the patient is scheduled to take prescribed medications, typically one to three times per day. In one embodiment, the alert consists of an audible alarm and the appearance of a written message on the graphical interface of the patient-signaling device. The message instructs the patient to perform a "heart check," that is to obtain physiological measurements from the implanted device. Instructions to the patient may include instructions to establish certain standard conditions, such as sitting quietly in a chair, prior to beginning the measurements. The patient is instructed to place the external telemetry/power coil over the implanted antenna coil, then to press a button to initiate the measurement sequence. Once the patient presses the button, the external device begins emits energy via the external coil to power and communicate with the implanted device. In one embodiment the external device emits an audible signal while communication is being established, then emits a second audible signal distinct from the first when communication has been established and while the measurement is taking place. Once the measurement is concluded, typically after 5 to 20 seconds, a third audible signal, distinct from the first two, is emitted to signal the patient that the measurement is complete.

[0313] In one embodiment, the external device will further instruct the patient, using its graphical interface, to enter additional information relevant to the patient's condition, such as weight, peripheral blood pressure, and symptoms. The signal processing apparatus of the external device then compares the measured physiological parameters from the implanted device, together with information entered by the patient, with ranges and limits

corresponding to different therapeutic actions as predetermined by the physician and stored in the external device as a "DynamicRx." The prescribed therapeutic action will then be communicated to the patient on the graphic display.

[0314] In one embodiment, the patient signaling apparatus will prompt the patient to confirm that each prescribed therapy has been performed. For example, if the therapy is taking a specific dose of oral medication, the patient will be prompted to press a button on the graphical interface when the medication has been taken. In one embodiment of the invention, this information is used to keep track of the number of pills remaining since the last time the patient's prescription was filled, so that the patient or caregiver can be reminded when it is time to refill the prescription.

[0315] As an example of a DynamicRx for a congestive heart failure patient, the level and rate of change of left atrial blood pressure (LAP) may be used by the physician to determine the dosage of diuretic. If the LAP remains in the normal range for that patient, the patient signaling device would display the normal dosage of diuretic. As in Example 1 above, if the LAP falls below the patient's normal range, the doctor may prescribe a reduction or withholding of diuretic, and that instruction would appear on the graphical interface. In another embodiment of DynamicRx the patient may be instructed to take some other kind of action, such as calling the physician or caregiver, altering diet or fluid intake, or getting additional rest. Thus, the apparatus and methods of the present invention allow the physician to conditionally prescribe therapy for the patient, and to communicate the appropriate therapy to the patient in response to dynamic changes in the patient's medical condition.

[0316] In one embodiment, the physician enters the therapeutic plan for the patient, e.g., the DynamicRx, on a personal computer and the DynamicRx is then loaded from the PC into the patient advisory module. In one embodiment, the patient advisory module is a PDA using the PalmOS operating system, and the DynamicRx is loaded from the physician's PC via the HotSync facility of PalmOS. Loading of the DynamicRx from the physician's PC could be performed in the physician's office, or could be performed over a telephone modem or via a computer network, such as the Internet.

[0317] In one embodiment, DynamicRx software running on the PC contains treatment templates that assist the physician in creating a complete DynamicRx, such that appropriate therapies/actions are provided for all possible values of the patient's physiological parameters.

[0318] In one embodiment of the present invention, the DynamicRX includes a patient instruction. In one embodiment, the patient instruction may includes directions or instructions to take medications, instructions to call 911, instructions to rest; or instructions to call a physician or medical care provider. In another embodiment of the present invention, one or more devices are provided to enable a physician or medical care provider to provide instruction to the patient. These devices include, but are not limited to, workstations, templates, PC-to-Palm hotsync operations, uploading processes, downloading processes, linking devices, wireless connections, networking, data cards, memory cards, and interface devices that permit the physician instruction to be loaded onto a patient's signal processor. In another embodiment, a user instruction is provided, where the user includes a patient, a physician, or a third party.

C. Example 3

[0319] Heart failure patients implanted with the embodiments described in the above two examples may at the time of such implantation, or subsequently develop a medical indication for concurrent implantation of a CRM device. For example, required heart failure treatment with beta-blocking medication may slow the heart rate sufficiently to induce symptoms such as fatigue, or may prevent the heart rate from increasing appropriately with exertion, a condition known as chronotropic incompetence. These conditions are recognized indications for atrial pacing or atrial pacing with a rate responsive type of pacemaker. Normally this involves the placement of a pacemaker generator and an atrial pacing lead usually positioned in the right atrial appendage. In many cases, a dual chamber pacemaker is placed to synchronously pace the right atrium via one lead and the right ventricle via a second pacing lead. In other cases, such heart failure patients may have an abnormality of electrical conduction within the heart such as is known to occur with a condition called left-bundle branch block that causes dysynchronous left ventricular contraction thereby worsening heart failure. Implantation of a biventricular pacemaker has been shown to

improve many of these patients. Because severe heart failure also carries an increased risk of sudden cardiac death due to a ventricular cardiac tachyarrhythmia, many of these patients are now being treated with implantable cardiac defibrillators (ICD's). In some cases combination rhythm management devices comprised of a biventricular pacemaker and an ICD are implanted.

[0320] In such cases where a CRM device is needed, it would be beneficial to the patient if the rhythm management device were integrated with the heart failure management devices described by Eigler, et al., in U.S. Patent No. 6,328,699 and U.S. Patent Application Publication Nos. 2003/0055344 and 2003/0055345, all of which are incorporated by reference in their entireties, to utilize the sensing lead yielding a pressure indicative of left atrial pressure additionally as an atrial pacing lead. It would be further beneficial if the LAP sensing lead system described in Example 2 could be upgraded to integrated with the heart failure management device without removing or changing the LAP sensing lead.

[0321] In one embodiment, the implanted heart failure device of Example 2 above is modified by replacing the implanted communications coil with an appropriately integrated CRM generator and additional pacing/ICD leads. The LAP sensing lead is connected as the atrial pacing lead to the generator. The generator has appropriate circuitry to power the sensing circuitry of the atrial lead. LAP is read out by telemetry between the external PDA and the telemetry coil in the housing of the integrated rhythm management generator. If clinically appropriate, right and left ventricular pacing or defibrillation leads can be placed and connected to the generator. There are many potential benefits from such a combined rhythm and heart failure management system in addition to the clinical benefits from each individual system. Fewer leads need to be placed in the heart and a single venous insertion site can be used with the combined system. Atrial pacing from the intra-atrial septum has been shown to inhibit paroxysmal atrial fibrillation, an arrhythmia common in heart failure patients. Patients can be titrated to higher or more appropriate beta-blocker dose levels with potentially increased survival benefits. Additionally, the LAP sensor can be used to control pacing parameters. As described above, the LAP waveform may be helpful in adjusting mechanical left-sided AV delay to optimize LV filling. Also, when LAP is within the desired normal range and thus the patient is not in acute heart failure, synchronous ventricular pacing

can be inhibited to prolong battery life. It is understood by those skilled in the art, such as cardiologists and cardiac surgeons, that there may be additional clinical benefits bestowed by the combination of heart failure and rhythm management devices.

[0322] While this invention has been particularly shown and described with references to embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention. For all of the embodiments described above, the steps of the methods need not be performed sequentially.